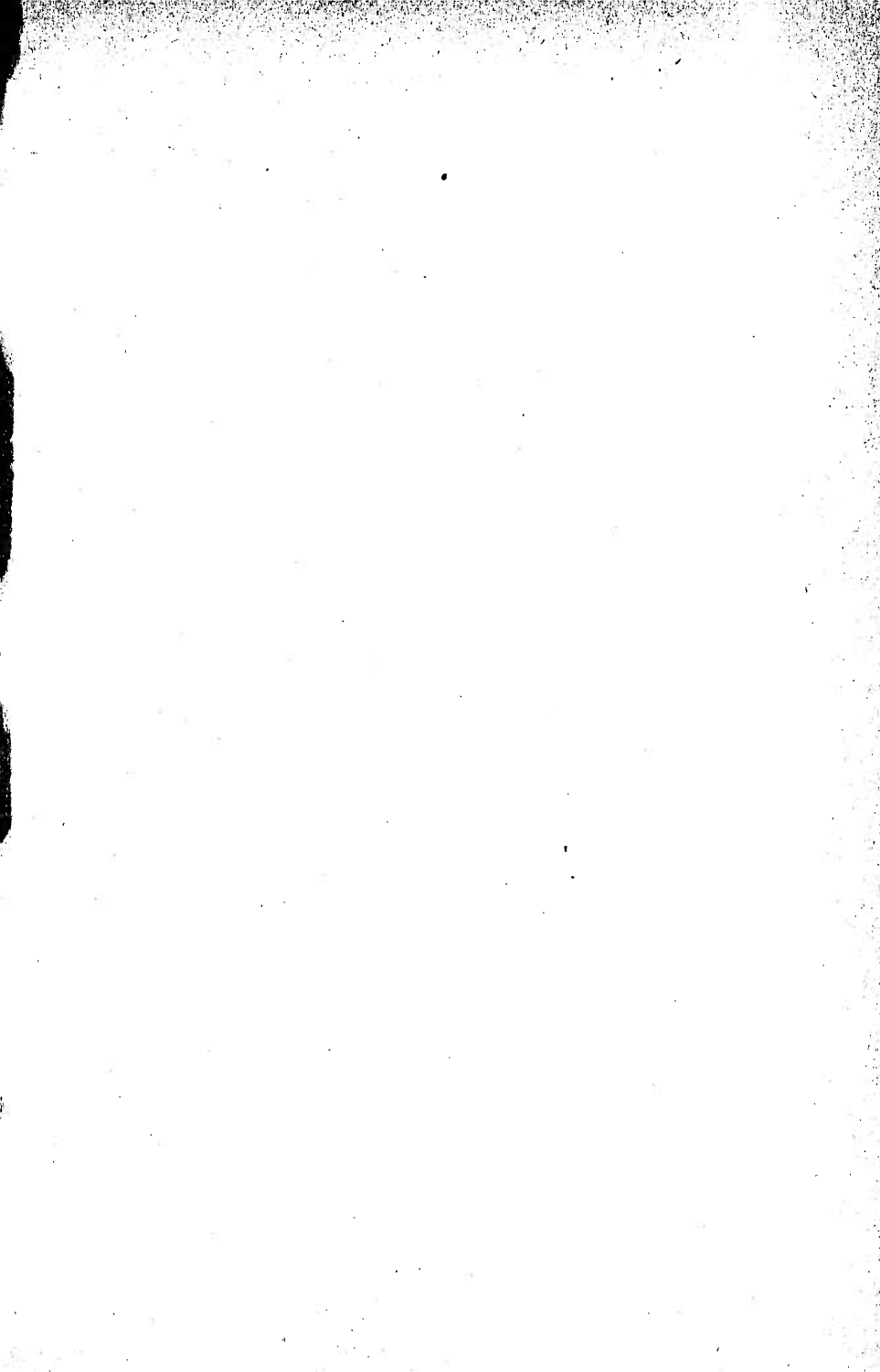


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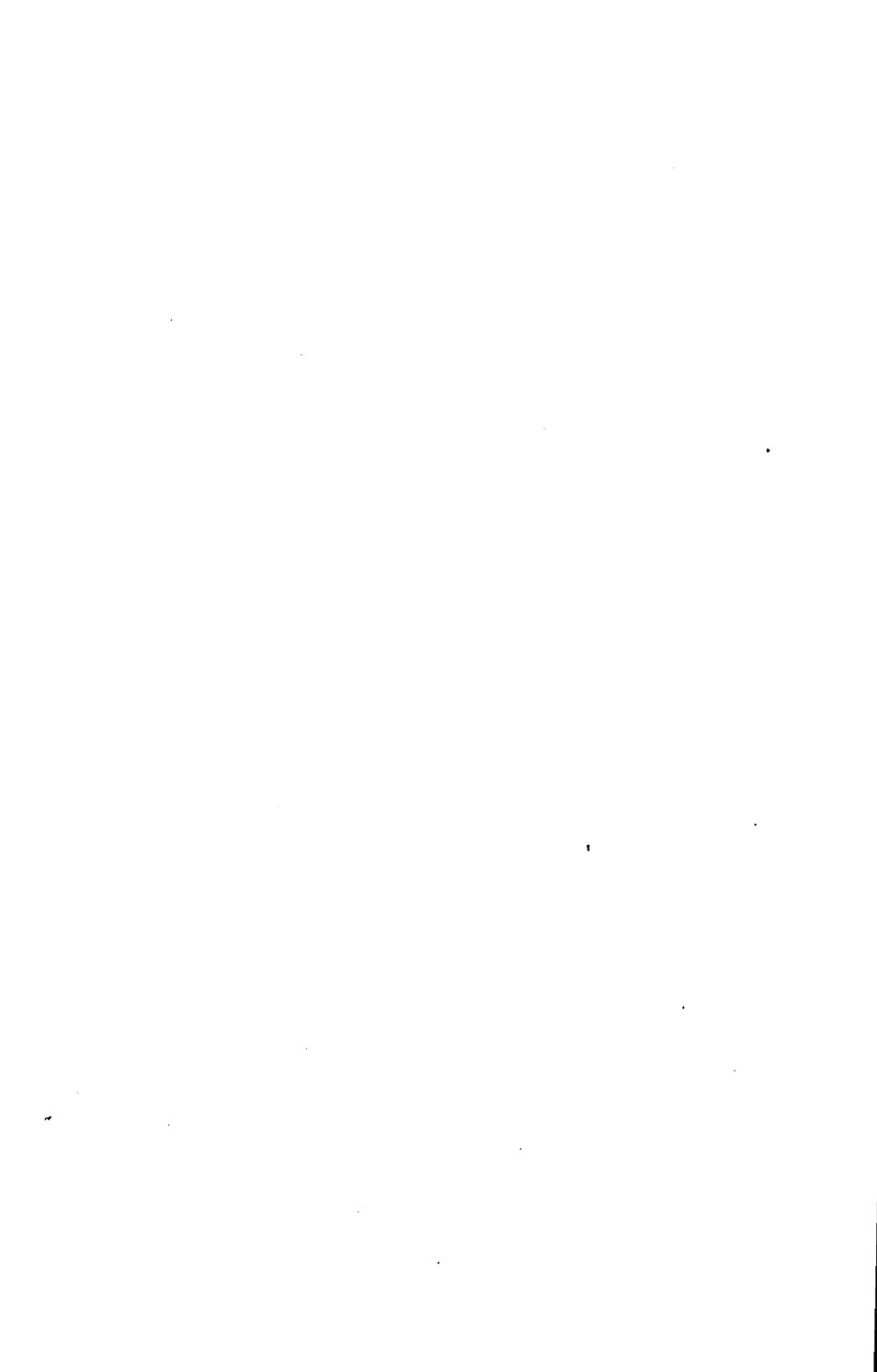


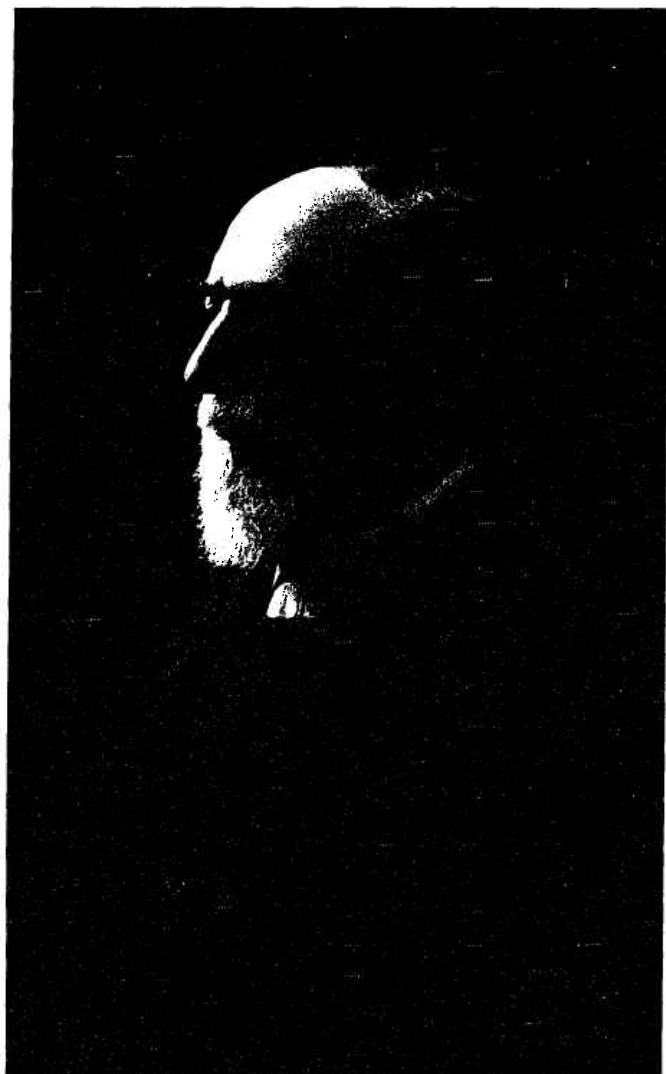


THE EVOLUTION OF  
LATIN CHRISTIANITY



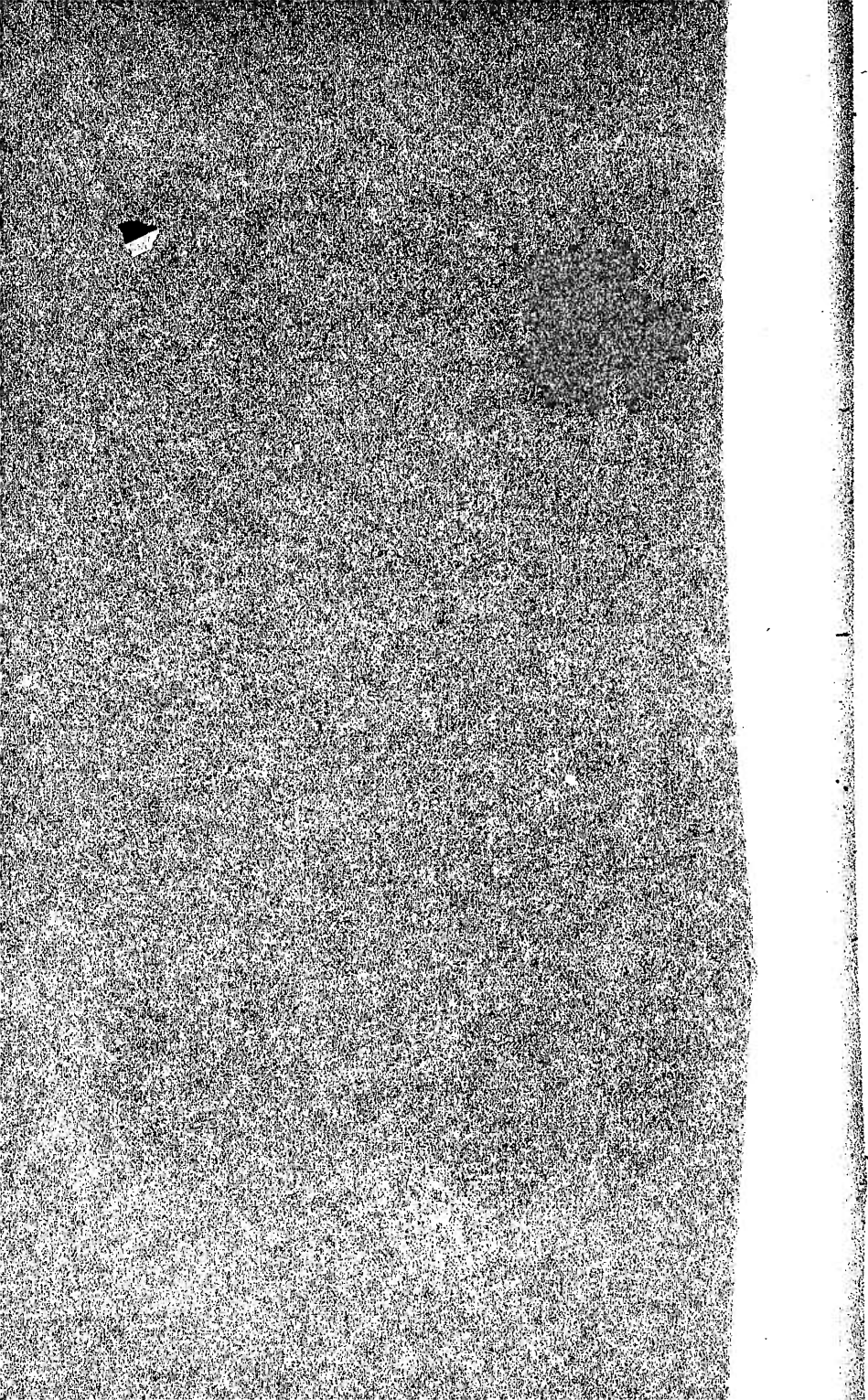






Livingston Jones,  
Alfred Heron.





# THE EVOLUTION OF LATIN CHRISTIANITY

BY

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"THE CHURCH OF THE SUB-APOSTOLIC AGE," "THE CELTIC CHURCH  
IN IRELAND," "A SHORT HISTORY OF PURITANISM,"  
"THE MAKING OF THE ULSTER SCOT," ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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History

## INTRODUCTION

THERE are still among us those who are prepared to damn all doubt as "devil-born," but happily they are a diminishing number; and to-day the experience in question, so common to thinking men and women, is at last receiving from psychologists and theologians that fair-minded consideration which it deserves. Indeed, the general verdict of to-day upon honest doubt assigns to it a place far nearer to faith than to unfaith; nay, in one aspect we realise that doubt *is* faith, for it is the token of an honest mind at grips with tradition; it is a challenge addressed by conscience to the tyranny of authority. Thus doubt is not infrequently the parent of independent thought; for it means, and especially in the days of youth, personal adjustment of mind to an environment hitherto accepted on the word and according to the interpretation of others. James and Starbuck have in these latter days taught us to think of it as a wonted concomitant of physical and mental adolescence, Browning and Tennyson as a high privilege of moral and spiritual living; but from whatever angle we may approach it, doubt certainly leads the minds of men to that discrimination, so necessary for progressive life, between truth and its counterfeit. It is therefore not surprising to observe that there are few indeed of those possessed of originality and vigour of thought and of that interest which begets interest in others, who have not at some time or other passed through the healthful if unsettling experience of an intellectual challenge of this kind which has sifted and systematised their philosophies of life, and enabled them to win through to a faith that is truly their own. Doubt, in short, is the great safeguard of vital experience and living faith.

Some one may not unreasonably ask what the foregoing words have to do with my purpose in this introduction. Two facts which seem to me not unrelated will, I think, provide a sufficient answer. In the first place Dr. Heron, who so recently passed from our midst amid universal sorrow, was one who, as a teacher, exhibited a perennial strength and freshness both of thought and expression,



and an infectious interest in his work as a Church historian—none who ever heard him lecture will dispute it. And in the second place—a point which to my mind elucidates the foregoing fact—Dr. Heron early met such a challenge to the claims of authority and tradition as I have referred to above, and that, too, in connection with the subject which became a life study for him. Not many years ago I heard the story from his own lips, and I have since found ample corroboration of it in various autobiographical notices from his pen, some published and some unpublished. The facts are briefly these. Not many years after his ordination to the ministry there appeared the well-known attack upon the orthodox statement of Christian origins which was published under the title of *Supernatural Religion*. Dr. Heron read it—some time before Bishop Lightfoot made his brilliant reply—and with more than interest. It was a challenge, and as such personally he accepted it. "I was led," he writes, "*for the satisfaction of my own mind*, to examine with care the evidence for the historicity of the New Testament writings." The evidence for or against was to be found in the writings of the early Church, especially in the literature of the first two centuries of our era; and to these sources Dr. (then Mr.) Heron turned to know the truth of the matter in dispute, and to see if their evidence were indeed such as it was represented to be. Needless to say he soon found it was not so; but this discovery; though it brought to him the satisfaction he sought, was not the end of his researches; rather was it the beginning. In the search for truth thus undertaken his mind had been stimulated and his interest in matters of ecclesiastical history keenly aroused; so he read on: and that he read to good purpose is abundantly evident from the works which he later gave to the public. In this incident, then, we have the genesis both of a life work and of that remarkable enthusiasm which sustained it for so many years.

It was nearly thirty years before he became a professor; but during all those years his interest had but grown in intensity, and of that interest he had already given more than one visible token to the world in published articles, larger and smaller, and above all in his first book, that upon the sub-apostolic age. Thus it was with a well-furnished mind that he took up the work of teaching history when he was called to it. But, as I have said, he had far more than intellectual equipment for his life work when it came;

he had that personal interest and freshness of outlook so essential to the successful teacher, and he had gained these things, as have most men, through the bracing mental experience of a challenge to belief boldly faced and answered. Dr. Heron was in his eighty-second year when he died. His body had indeed grown frail, but his intellectual alertness and enthusiasm were those of a young man to the last. Readers of this book will, I think, agree that neither the style nor the substance suggest an old man. No; that amazing interest which had gripped him over fifty years before had abated nothing of its hold over his thoughts, and he was still—in mind—the youthful enthusiast for Church History which he had been in his thirties.

James Heron, to turn to his life, was born near Rathfriland on the 5th December 1836. Environment and ancestry contributed not a little even in his early days to make him the man that he subsequently became. The house in which he was born was itself on the site of an ancient rath or fort, and the boy's interest was early turned by the traditions and fairy tales surrounding his birthplace to a love of antiquarian lore which later bore rich fruit. His great-grandfather, again, on his mother's side was the Rev. Thomas Mayn, one of the founders of the Burgher branch of the Secession Synod in Ireland, and a remarkable personality in his day and generation, who has been described as "one of the ablest, most pious, and most influential ministers that ever blessed the County of Down." Of this notable ministerial ancestor the young boy heard repeated many a story, and the things which he thus heard had, he himself felt, no small influence in determining both his tastes and his career. After studying in his early years at a classical school in Rathfriland, and later at the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast, he passed at a rather early age to Queen's Collège, Belfast, from which he finally graduated in 1858. A severe illness which cut short his second session at the Collège was regarded by him in later years as providential, in that it gave him a leisure he was glad to get for reading of a general kind, and so enabled him to reduce the handicap of youth with which he had started his university course. It was during this time of enforced quiet that his real intellectual life came to the birth through the reading of two great books—Locke *On the Human Understanding* and Butler's *Analogy of Religion*; and the works of Josephus which he read about the same time gave his consequent interest in things

of the mind a definitely historical turn. As a result, when he returned to the college in sounder health, he found himself fully abreast of the work of the different classes, and won from Dr. McCosh, then Professor in Belfast and later President of Princeton College in America, the expressed opinion that "he stood the first man in his year." After his graduation in the old Queen's University Mr. Heron pursued his theological course in Belfast and Edinburgh. In both places alike he had the advantage of being the fellow student of a number of brilliant men, many of whom made their mark later in scholarship; but among them he held his own. Within a few weeks of his licensure in 1861 as a probationer of the Irish Presbyterian Church he received three calls to congregations. He accepted that to Muckamore where he was ordained in the same year, and thus entered upon what was to be a very happy and successful ministry. Before he left Muckamore his interest in the history of the Church had been challenged into vigorous life by the appearance of the book before mentioned. From this time onward he worked incessantly at the subject, for even when the spectres of doubt had been laid by his reading he continued the study as a labour of love. From Muckamore he passed to the First Presbyterian Church of Kilrea in 1869, where he worked for five years. Then in 1874 he received two unanimous calls, one to Newry and the other to the newly organised congregation at the Knock, Belfast. He accepted the latter and worked in the suburbs of Belfast as minister of Dundela Church till 1889, when he was unanimously appointed by the General Assembly to succeed the venerable Dr. Killen in the chair of Church History and Pastoral Theology in their Belfast college. Here he lived and laboured till his death in April of this year (1918). During these twenty-eight years of professorial work he received not a few tokens of the public regard and esteem; of these honours there were three in particular without a mention of which this short sketch of his life would certainly be incomplete. In 1891 the Presbyterian Theological Faculty of Ireland conferred upon him the degree of D.D. In June, 1901, he received the highest honour which is in the gift of our Church in being elected as Moderator of the General Assembly. And in April, 1912, on the occasion of his ministerial jubilee, his portrait, painted by Mrs. Normand at the instance of many friends, was publicly unveiled and presented to the college to be hung in the Gamble Library.

For the greater part of a long lifetime Dr. Heron was blessed by an able and devoted wife. Margaret Turretin and he met and became engaged in his undergraduate days; they were married in 1862, and their long and happy partnership, during which they became the parents of a large family, lasted till 1915, when Mrs. Heron passed away. From the shock of his wife's death Professor Heron, himself in failing health, never recovered; I think it was only his great desire to have the present book in the printer's hands before his death which sustained him amid much suffering of body for so long.

From his days in Muckamore Dr. Heron was a student and a writer, though for many years he wrote nothing beyond articles and pamphlets, some dealing with historical subjects, some with the vexed music controversy or other questions of the day, in all of which matters he soon proved himself one of the leaders of the progressive party within the Church. The discovery of the *Didaché* in 1883, however, so deeply interested him, especially in view of the strong support which it gave to conclusions he had independently arrived at in the course of his own reading, that he ventured to publish a study of the book with a detailed discussion of the various questions it raised in his volume entitled *The Church of the Sub-Apostolic Age*. This book, which was published during his ministry at Dundela, was well received by the public and most favourably reviewed by the experts. As professor he followed up this success with two other well-known works, *The Celtic Church in Ireland* (being the Carey Lectures for 1896) and *A Short History of Puritanism*. Like his first book, both of these were heartily welcomed by the reading public and received warm praise from those in high places. Nor was the popularity of his books to be wondered at, for Dr. Heron, in addition to the mind of the scholar, possessed an exceptional gift of popular exposition. All his work is eminently readable, being not only able and sane in substance, but vigorous and lucid in style, and well lighted throughout with the windows of illustration and anecdote.

But none of these books, valuable as they were, either was or claimed to be his *magnum opus*; they were but offshoots from the main stem of his historical work, and as such he regarded them. The point in Church history which had most gripped his mind was, to quote his own words, "the profound and radical change which Christianity underwent from the second century onward." To this

subject he gave his best thought and attention from the first, and, in the covering letter to his testimonials as candidate for the chair to which he was appointed in 1889, he stated : " For ten years I have been, in my almost daily study of patristic literature, accumulating materials for a book on the developments of primitive Christianity." It is this long-intended work which now lies, in substance, if not in title, before the reader ; a book which was finished in manuscript before his death, but which unhappily he has not lived to see in print. Thus the present volume is Dr. Heron's real life work according to the evidence of his own words. Written mainly in old age, it is nevertheless not a book of his old age, rather it is the book of his life ; a book for which, as we have seen, he had been reading, thinking and planning for some fifty years. However men may seek to explain or to excuse the facts which are interpreted for us in the present volume, Dr. Heron's thesis of a great and radical change in early Christianity, which differentiated clearly between the Christianity of the primitive Church and that of later days, will, I think, be granted by most of those who have delved into the subject with a more or less open mind. Whether the reader of this book agrees or not with the statement of the case herein given by the author, or with the conclusions he has drawn from it, we would bespeak an unprejudiced and sympathetic reception for this *life work* of a man who to the last day of his life was distinguished not only by a love of truth and scholarship, but also by a kindly tolerance and sympathy even towards those who differed most widely from him. The vigour of his expression and the strength of his views—both certainly conspicuous in this as in all his work, published or unpublished—had always conviction and never arrogance as their foundation ; and it is surely nothing to his discredit that with all his gentleness and humility of spirit he knew his own mind.

Dr. Heron will long be remembered by his students and by all who had the privilege of his acquaintance not only as a friend of kindly, modest and lovable disposition, but as a man of intellectual enthusiasm and of spiritual grip. He had, moreover, a genius for friendship among persons of all ages which, with his other great qualities of mind and heart, readily secured for him the unanimous devotion and affection of all who came beneath his influence whether as pastor or professor ; and in the college which he adorned for so many years his spiritual intensity, his intellectual and

literary gifts, and the magnetic spell of a pure and noble mind will not soon be forgotten, nor, I think, the striking beauty of the prayers with which he opened his daily classes—to some these prayers will remain the most outstanding memory of Professor Heron's classroom. Sarcasm had no place in his dealings with men—his spirit was too gentle to let him wound even with a word ; but that he could use to the full that dangerous weapon of debate is amply evidenced by his published work, where it figures not infrequently and always with telling effect. Towards his fellow men charitable and kindly at all times, he certainly showed no mercy towards what he regarded as error, superstition, tyranny or evil, as I think the present work will sufficiently demonstrate. Those who were privileged to be his friends will be glad indeed to have this "last word" from one who was a sincere, gracious and humble Christian man, and a whole-hearted servant of the Church of God.

It is neither my purpose nor my place to review the work which follows, but there are one or two observations I wish to make before I conclude. Popular as the subject discussed in the present volume has long been among theological writers, and great as has been the number of books which it has called forth in recent times, strangely few writers have attempted anything like a careful chronological treatment of the material. Few books, for instance, would enable a student seeking the information to distinguish clearly between the positions before and after the Council of Trent, or indeed before and after any other great landmark of the evolution concerned. If at points in the following pages certain critical assumptions, theological preconceptions, historical judgments, or the like, betray the writer's generation, yet all who read the book without prejudice will, I think, be ready to admit its permanent value, not only as a work of great literary charm and as a convenient book of reference, but in particular as supplying that lack to which I have just referred—the lack of a genuinely *historical* conspectus of the various developments of Latin Christianity.

The book was originally written for delivery as lectures to a class, and a trace of this original form may be noted by readers in the case of certain quotations which, for the sake of completeness in lecturing, appear *in extenso* on more than one occasion. We have thought it better to leave the text as it stands with this word of explanation.

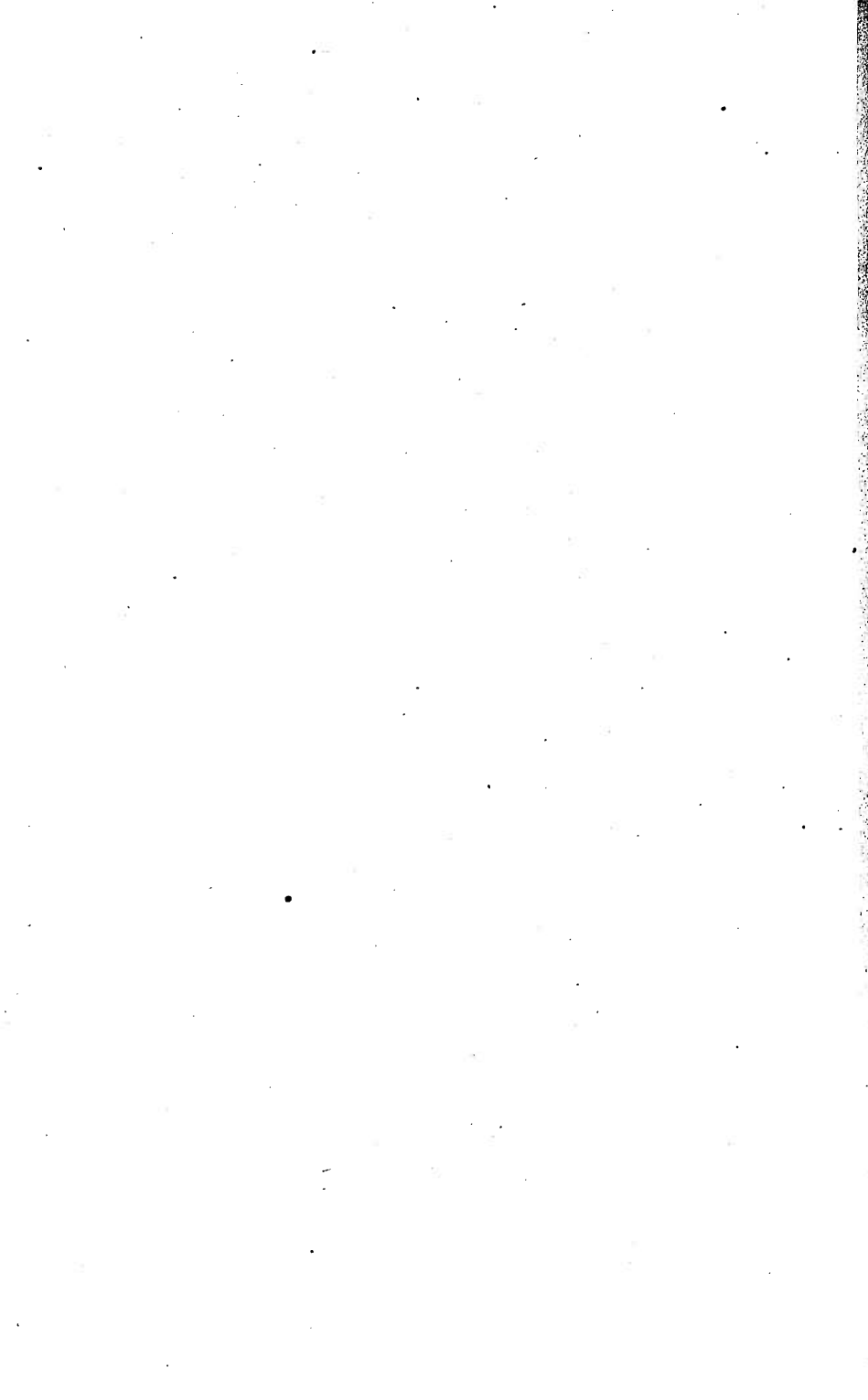
Owing to the haste with which this volume was prepared for the press after Dr. Heron's death it has not been possible fully to check all references. If mistakes in such matters are discovered, as is not improbable, the indulgence of the readers is asked for. Sincere thanks are due to several friends for their kindness in reading proofs and otherwise preparing this volume for publication; also to a wider circle who gave advice and assistance in various matters; and, in a word, to all who, at such a difficult period in the national life, have in any way by their help enabled us to put upon our shelves this final message from a man so greatly beloved by all who knew him.

J. ERNEST DAVEY.

COLLEGE PARK,  
BELFAST, 1918.

*To the Memory of*  
THE DEAR WIFE AND COMPANION  
OF MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS  
AND  
TO THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS  
AND  
NO LESS BELOVED GRANDCHILDREN  
SHE HAS LEFT  
TO CHEER AND BRIGHTEN  
AN OLD MAN'S DECLINING AGE  
AND TO OTHERS ALSO,  
FORMER STUDENTS OF THIS COLLEGE,  
NOT NOW VISIBLE TO MORTAL EYE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN,  
WITH THE LIGHT OF ANOTHER LIFE UPON THEM,  
HE DEDICATES THIS VOLUME





## PREFACE

THE theory of evolution applied by Darwin to the province of biology has been extended to the treatment of ethical, social, and religious problems as well. It is recognised, too, by writers of weight and authority both English and Continental that in the evolution of any system of philosophy, morals, or religion, we have its real and essential history. In his *Essays in Political and Moral Philosophy* Professor Cliffe Leslie points out what a benefit it would be to "all our systems of politics, morals, and metaphysics, if we knew exactly how they grew up, and what transformations they have undergone; if we knew, in short, the true history of the ideas" which underlie them. That is precisely what we aim at showing in this book with regard to Latin Christianity—how exactly it "grew up," "what transformations it underwent," and "the true history of the ideas which underlie" those transmutations. "It is an old story now," says Lord Acton, "that the true history of philosophy is the true evolution of philosophy."<sup>1</sup> It is of course equally true that in the evolution of a religion we have its true history, and that to trace that evolution with insight and accuracy is, without doubt, the best method of getting a just idea of it.

Now, it is proposed in the following pages to apply this method in the study of the history of Latin Christianity. Taking up in succession the main features and characteristics of Latin Christianity, or what is better known as "Roman Catholicism," my purpose is to trace them from what is claimed to be their germinal source in apostolic teaching and example through the successive stages of their development to their maturity; to consider with special care whether the evolution undergone by them was sound and legitimate, answering fairly to any recognised test or standard; or proving false and counterfeit when brought to judgment by it.

It is contended that the papacy of the apostolic and sub-apostolic age is to the later papacy what the acorn is to the oak, what the child is to the full-grown man—that the latter is a legitimate development of the former. There is, of course, a legitimate development in religion, and Roman Catholic writers of authority admit the possibility

<sup>1</sup> Lord Acton's "History of Freedom and Other Essays," p. 590.

of a development which is *not* legitimate. Vincent of Lerins expressly condemns the "mutilation" of a Christian ordinance; he even prohibits the "addition" of superfluous or alien matter in the evolutionary process. He freely grants that "nothing is to be changed from the peculiar nature of the germ"; nothing is to be brought in alien to the original idea and type of Christian thought and life. In his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Cardinal Newman takes similar ground. As necessary and proper tests of a genuine development he lays down "preservation of type," "continuity of principle," "power of assimilation," "logical sequence," and a few similar conditions. We are not disposed to quarrel with the tests selected by these writers. We suspect that much of the doctrine, discipline, and ritual of the Latin Church will find it difficult to survive the ordeal of Dr. Newman's own carefully selected criteria. That is all we ask—the honest application of these and such-like touchstones to the matters in question. For our part, in following step by step through its successive stages the evolution of Latin Christianity we have not consciously deviated by an hair's-breadth from the strict lines of historical accuracy. It has been our constant and steady aim to represent the facts and movements exactly as they occurred. If "in nothing we have extenuated," we have certainly "set down naught in malice."

It was the purpose of the author to deliver the chapters that compose this book to his class of Church History in the Assembly's College, Belfast, during the session 1916—1917. Prior to the opening of the session, however, his health had broken down so seriously as to make their delivery by him impossible. In these circumstances a large proportion of the chapters was read to the class by the President of the College, Rev. M. Leitch, M.A., D.Lit., D.D., who is also Professor of Biblical Criticism in the College; the remainder being given to the class by the Rev. T. M. Hamill, M.A., D.D., Professor of Systematic Theology. Each of these scholars afterwards sent to the author a letter of appreciation of the lectures which he had in charge, letters which will probably be of interest to many readers and which will be found in the Appendix at the end of the present volume.

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**BOOK I**  
**THE MINISTRY AGGRANDISED**



# THE EVOLUTION OF LATIN CHRISTIANITY

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## CHAPTER I

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRIEST

THE principle of a mediating, sacrificing official priesthood, matured and formulated by Cyprian in the third century, was fully endorsed by the Latin Church, formed a vital part of its constitution through the mediæval period, and is of course still held by the authorities of that communion to be essential to the very existence of a Church.

The principle of a mediating official priesthood endorsed by the Latin Church.

And the adoption of the same principle by a large and influential section of the Anglican communion has given it a certain glamour and prestige in modern eyes, and created in wide communities a strong bias and prepossession in its favour. According to eminent Anglicans, like Bishop Gore, a religious community that is destitute of such a priesthood, episcopally ordained, cannot be regarded as a Church of Christ at all, or as being in fellowship with God, which depends on fellowship with His Church. Non-episcopal communities, however Christ-like in spirit and life, being without a true priesthood are, by the deliberate and solemn declaration of the Bishop of Oxford, cut off from access to the Most High God, are "outside the special and covenanted sphere of His regular and uniform operations," "the home of the New Covenant of salvation" instituted by the incarnate Son of God, are without any valid administration of the sacraments, and destitute of "an authoritative stewardship of the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> If the matter were not so grave and serious, it would be an occasion of grim humour and gruesome mirth to the profane that Dr. Gore himself

Adopted also by a section of the Anglican Church.

<sup>1</sup> Gore's "The Church and the Ministry," pp. 11, 57, 70, 344.



The Angli-  
can claim  
denied by  
Rome.

and his Anglican communion are similarly cut off by the Latin Church from fellowship with heaven, and left in the same forlorn condition as non-episcopalians are left by Dr. Gore. At any rate it cannot but be a matter of vital concern to those who find themselves in this outcast, pitiable plight, to make sure whether or not the exclusive theory which consigns them to such a fate has any justification in the teaching of the founders of Christianity, while a grave responsibility rests on those who set up such a narrow and exclusive theory, a conception of the Church of Christ which unchurches and hands over to the uncovenanted mercies of the Almighty many millions of professing Christians, whose lives, to say the least, exhibit as much of the spirit of Christ as the lives of those who ban them. The grounds on which such a fearful dogma is based ought to be clear and certain beyond dispute. Are they so? On the contrary, it is probable that in the whole history of human thought no dogma carrying in it such awful consequences has ever been advanced with so little to justify it, with such an overwhelming body of evidence pointing the other way. For there is nothing in history more certain than that the priesthood that is made so vital and essential to the very existence of the Church and to communion with God and participation in His grace is the development of a later time than that of Christ and His apostles, a development due in great measure to pagan influences, and not only foreign to the thought of our Lord and His apostles, but in direct antagonism to their teaching. The rise of a professional priesthood, a sacerdotal caste within the Christian society, was in fact a slow and gradual evolution, which can be traced with the utmost clearness and certainty in the literature of the second and third centuries.

This exclu-  
sive theory  
of priest-  
hood  
foreign to  
the teaching  
of Christ and  
His apostles  
—the devel-  
opment of a  
later time.

It will be expedient, however, before I proceed to trace it, to state more definitely and precisely what I mean by the word "priest," and to apprise the reader of the sense in which it is employed in the pages that follow.

The word  
"priest"  
defined.

The word has been used in two senses. (1) The English word "priest" is simply a contracted form of the Latin "presbyter" and so of the Greek *πρεσβύτερος*, which means literally "elder." It came into English through the old French or Norman *prestre*—as representing the word "presbyter" or elder. In that sense it designates a Christian minister or official (one of a number) who along with others presides over and ministers to a Christian

community or congregation; and in that sense it carries no sacerdotal taint in it. (2) In the second sense in which the term "priest" occurs it is equivalent to the Latin *sacerdos* and the Greek *ιερεύς*, and denotes the sacrificing, mediating official of the Jewish and pagan religions, and the corresponding Christian official of a later time who is supposed to discharge similar sacerdotal functions. It is in this second sense that for the most part we employ the word "priest" in these pages.

Now the essential characteristics of a priest, as explained by sacerdotalists generally, and especially as defined by Cyprian, the father of sacerdotalism, are briefly these:—

1. He alone, as representing the congregation before God, is empowered to stand at the altar and offer propitiatory sacrifice, such especially as he is conceived as offering in the Eucharist. "The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are really and truly present on the altar, under the forms of bread and wine, and the priest offers the sacrifice to God the Father."<sup>1</sup> In this sacrament accordingly the Church approaches God only through the priest.

2. As representative of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ to the congregation, the priest possesses the Holy Spirit, received at ordination, and is the authoritative steward of divine grace and truth to the congregation; so grace flows to the people only through the priest.

3. As God's vicegerent he has received also the power of the keys, which confers on him the right to judge in Christ's stead, and to withhold or grant absolution from sin.

4. These great prerogatives are conferred by episcopal ordination, the bishop having derived them by succession from the apostles.

Now, the first question that arises is: Is the official priest as thus defined found in the New Testament? And the answer need delay us only for a moment. The ministers of the New Testament have various names applied to them, such as pastors, teachers, presbyters or elders, bishops, and the like, but they are never called "priests," that is, sacrificing, mediating priests (*ιερείς*), like those of the old Testament. Their functions are minutely specified, but not only are the prerogatives of an exclusive priesthood as defined above never attributed to them, the general tenor of New Testament teaching is distinctly and emphatically opposed to the principle of an exclusive sacerdotal caste; and the title which is never in a single

The essential characteristics of a priest as defined by Cyprian.

He alone may stand at the altar and offer sacrifice.

He alone is the mediating agent of the Holy Spirit, and the steward of grace to the congregation.

He alone has the power of the keys, judges in Christ's stead and grants or withholds absolution.

These prerogatives conferred only by episcopal ordination.

No trace of an official priesthood in the New Testament.

<sup>1</sup> Catechism on the office of Holy Communion.

The title is assigned to Christians generally.

Even the power of the keys is given to the whole Church.

instance applied to the office bearers is assigned to Christians generally. It is the ordinary Church members who are called "an holy priesthood."<sup>1</sup> It is not any special class of office-bearers, but the whole body of disciples who are made "kings (or a kingdom) and priests unto God and the Father."<sup>2</sup> They are "priests" in the same sense in which they are "kings," and that is not literally, but figuratively and morally; "priests" in the same sense in which they are called in the same passage a "house," a "spiritual house," and that is not literally but metaphorically. Accordingly, the sacrifices which they offer are "spiritual sacrifices"<sup>3</sup>—namely, *themselves*,<sup>4</sup> *prayer*,<sup>5</sup> *praise*,<sup>6</sup> *alms-giving*,<sup>7</sup> *good doing*.<sup>8</sup> In short, as Calvin points out, all exercises of piety, everything done in God's service—the whole Christian life—may be and is represented as a sacrifice in this metaphorical and spiritual sense. Of course, the office-bearers are "priests" in this sense. But they have no special exclusive priesthood. All Christians have as free access to God in Christ as the official ministry; and the Holy Spirit was given not mediately through the latter, but immediately and directly to the Church as a whole. Even the power of the keys given first to Peter<sup>9</sup> is extended to the whole Church.<sup>10</sup> Referring to John xx. 22, 23, "He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," Bishop Westcott concludes a careful exposition of the passage with these words: "There is nothing in the context to show that the gift was confined to any particular group (as the apostles) among the whole company present. The commission, therefore, must be regarded properly as the commission of the Christian society, and not as that of the Christian ministry."<sup>11</sup> Not only is the power of discipline given to the Church, but, as Westcott expresses it, "the living and abiding power to declare the fact and conditions of forgiveness"—in other words, the authority to offer forgiveness ministerially to all who repent and believe in the name of Christ—is here committed to her. As the Westminster Confession puts it, power is given to "shut the Kingdom against the impeni-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. xii. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. xiii. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. xiii. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Matt. xviii. 17, 18, compared with John xx. 22 and Luke xxiv. 33.

<sup>11</sup> See Westcott's "Gospel of John," p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. i. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. v. 8; viii. 3, 4 compared with Ps. cxli. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Acts xxiv. 17; Phil. iv. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. xvi. 19.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 5.

tent, both by the Word and censures ; and to open it unto penitent sinners by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures." When in Rom. xv. 16—a passage out of which sacerdotalists have tried to make large capital—the apostle speaks of himself as ministering the gospel of God, and of the conversion of the Gentiles as being an offering presented by the apostle, the language, which is highly figurative, does not go beyond the privilege of that spiritual priesthood which belongs to the whole Church. Every one, whether minister or ordinary member, who is the means of converting others, may apply the same language to himself. The Roman Christians themselves were being called on to act as priests in the same spiritual sense when they were besought by the apostle to " present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God." <sup>1</sup>

Now, when Chemnitz—a distinguished Lutheran divine, a pupil of Melancthon—pressed Bellarmine, the great Romish controversialist, with this consideration—that the term "*ιερείς*" is never applied to the Christian minister in the New Testament, and that there is no trace there of an official priesthood—Bellarmine admitted that the fact was so, but sought to account for it by replying that " it was not the design of God to precipitate the separation between the Mosaic system and Christianity, to throw scorn on the ancient faith, to present Christianity as a rival system, or to bring out too prominently at first all the distinctions which were in due season to unfold themselves—to place the gospel in direct antagonism with the Jewish religion." But Bellarmine's plea was not in harmony with the plain facts of the case. The first apostles and evangelists never hesitated to point out the true relation between the Mosaic system and the gospel. Stephen, for example, did not hesitate to do this, and the plainness of his demonstration led to the charge that he " spake blasphemous words against the holy place and the law," and, in fact, cost him his life. A very large proportion of Paul's teaching was devoted to the same object. The Epistle to the Hebrews in particular shows how little the writer of that letter was restrained by the consideration adduced by Bellarmine, and that he affirms in the most emphatic way that the sacerdotal, sacrificial system of the Jews is consummated and superseded in Christ. Nay, as we have seen, Peter and John do not shrink from applying this very term to Christians, who are " a holy priesthood," " a kingdom and priests unto

Bellar-  
mine's  
reason for  
the silence  
of the New  
Testament  
untenable.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 1.

God and the Father." The plea by which Bellarmine seeks to account for the omission to apply this title to the Christian ministry in the New Testament—a plea so often repeated by the modern sacerdotalist—is thus found to be at variance with the true facts of the case. We may, therefore, ask with Hooker—"Seeing, then, that sacrifice is no part of the Church ministry, how should the name of priesthood be thereunto applied?" and conclude with him that "in truth the word 'presbyter' doth seem more fit, and in propriety of speech more agreeable than 'priest' with the drift of the whole gospel of Christ."

In the Christian literature of the second century no trace of an official priesthood.

Testimony of apologists.

We pass now from the New Testament to the literature of the second century, and here the same state of things obtains: an official priesthood is still conspicuous by its absence. Indeed one of the chief reproaches brought against the Christians by their heathen opponents in the early centuries of the Christian era was that they had no temples and no images, no altars, no priesthood, and no sacrifices; and for this reason they were denounced as atheists by the heathen. How do the early Christian apologists meet this charge? Do they deny the facts on which the charge was based? On the contrary they freely admit them, and glory in them. Writing about A.D. 177, Athenagoras says—"Those who charge us with atheism have not the faintest conception of what God is; foolish and utterly unacquainted with natural and Divine things, they measure piety by the rule of sacrifices. . . . As to our not sacrificing, the Father and Father of this Universe does not need blood, nor the odour of burnt-offerings, nor the fragrance of flowers and incense, since He Himself is perfect fragrance, needing nothing either within or without; but the noblest sacrifice is to know Who stretched out the heavens . . . Who adorned the sky with stars, and made the earth to bring forth seed of every kind, Who made animals and fashioned man. . . . We lift up holy hands to him; what need has He further of a hecatomb. . . . Yet it does behove us to offer a bloodless sacrifice and the service of our reason." <sup>1</sup>

"Shall I offer victims and sacrifices to the Lord," asks Minucius Felix, "such as He has produced for my use, that I should throw back to Him His own gift? It were ungrateful, when the victim fit for sacrifice is a good disposition, a pure mind, and a sincere judgment. Therefore, he who cultivates innocence supplicates God; he who

<sup>1</sup> "Apol." c. 13.

cultivates justice makes offerings to God ; he who abstains from fraud propitiates God ; he who snatches man from danger slays the most acceptable victim. These are our sacrifices, these are our rites of God's worship." <sup>1</sup> And Arnøbius and Lactantius adduce the same arguments against temples, priests, and altars, sacrifices, lights, and incense in God's worship.

Bishop Lightfoot has gone through the Christian writings of the second century *seriatim*, and shown how far they are from the sacerdotal ideas of a later time. In the *Didaché*, in the Epistles of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Barnabas, and in the *Pastor* of Hermas, even in the Epistles of Ignatius, there is no trace of such ideas. The statements of Justin Martyr bearing on this may be given as a specimen. Justin Martyr admits that Christianity has its priests and sacrifices, but the priests are the whole Christian people, and the sacrifices are spiritual. "We are the true high-priestly race of God, even as God Himself bears witness, saying that in every place among the Gentiles sacrifices are presented to Him well-pleasing and pure. Yea, God doth not receive sacrifices from any one except through His priests. Therefore God, anticipating all sacrifices through this name, which Jesus Christ ordained to be offered, I mean those offered by the Christians in every region of the earth, with the thanksgiving of the bread and of the cup, beareth witness that they are well-pleasing to Him." He says again, "Prayers and giving of thanks, when offered by worthy men, are the only perfect and well-pleasing sacrifices to God. For such alone Christians have undertaken to offer, and in the remembrance made by their food, both solid and liquid, in which the suffering of the Son of God, which He endured, is brought to remembrance" <sup>2</sup> The whole Christian people constitute the only priesthood recognised by Justin.

Result of  
Lightfoot's  
examina-  
tion of  
*Didaché*,  
Clement of  
Rome,  
Polycarp,  
Barnabas,  
Hermas,  
Ignatius,  
Justin  
Martyr,  
Irenæus-  
Clement of  
Alexandria.

Exactly similar is the testimony of Irenæus.

And no writer could be more remote from anything savouring of sacerdotalism than Clement of Alexandria. (For Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria, see Lightfoot's Dissertation on "The Christian Ministry" in his *Epistle to Philipians*, pp. 252, 254, of 6th edition.)

We have now approached the close of the second century and yet so far there is absolutely no trace of an official priesthood. "It cannot be shown," says Harnack, "that there were any Christian circles where the leaders were

<sup>1</sup> "Apol." c. 22.

<sup>2</sup> "Dial. c. Tryph." 116, 117.

The first Christian writer who calls the office-bearers priests is Tertullian, but with him laymen also are priests in the same sense.

The development, completed under Cyprian, which made the bishops and elders priests, was, according to Harnack, the greatest and most radical of innovations in the early Church.

Successive stages in the evolution :  
1. First stage : application of the term " sacrifice " to the Lord's Supper.

directly styled priests before the last quarter of the second century."<sup>1</sup> And very significant it is that the first occurrence of the term as applied to a Christian minister is found not in a Christian, but in a heathen writer, Lucian. The first Christian writer who applies the title to the office-bearers of the Church is Tertullian, who in a work written about the end of the century calls the bishop "summus sacerdos." "We may perhaps infer from his works," says Harnack, "that before the year 200 the name 'priest' was not yet universally applied to bishop and presbyters in Carthage." But his latest works, written in the third century, show that "the name and the conception which it represents were already prevalent." Still Harnack regards both Irenæus and Tertullian, when compared with Cyprian, as "representatives of primitive Christianity. They firmly assert the priesthood of the whole congregation." "Are not we laymen also priests?" asks Tertullian. "It is written, 'He hath also made us a kingdom and priests unto God and the Father.' It is the authority of the Church which makes a difference between the order (*i.e.*, the clergy) and the people—this authority and the consecration of their rank by the assignment of special benches of the clergy. Thus where there is no bench of clergy, you present the Eucharistic offerings, and baptise and are your own sole priests. For where three are gathered together there is a Church, even though they be laymen." A little after the middle of the third century the development was virtually complete under Cyprian, and "that development which made the bishops and elders priests," says Harnack, "changed the inward form of the Church more radically than any other."<sup>2</sup> "This greatest innovation," he calls it. The development, at first slow and almost imperceptible, was much accelerated after the third century had begun, and by the middle of that century was practically completed; but to the careful student of the history of the period it is not difficult to mark the successive stages in the evolutionary process which ended in the appearance of a full-blown official priesthood. Those stages I have now to indicate.

1. The first step was taken in the application, early in the sub-apostolic age, of the term "sacrifice" to the

<sup>1</sup> "Hist. of Dogma," Vol. II., Chap. III., addenda, note 2. Lord Acton, writing in 1890, calls Dr. Adolf Harnack "the best ecclesiastical historian now living." See his "History of Freedom and Other Essays," p. 434.

<sup>2</sup> "Hist. of Dogma," p. 131.

Lord's Supper, although it was still applied in a sense strictly spiritual.

The gifts and offerings brought by the Christian people on the Lord's Day by way of providing bread and wine for the Eucharist, and means of living for the poor, with the prayers and thanksgivings offered in connection with the ordinance, were from early times represented as a spiritual sacrifice offered up to God, and recognised as a fulfilment of the prophecy in Mal. i. 11, that among the Gentiles in every place a "pure offering" would be presented unto His name. As Harnack puts it: "In accordance with the purely spiritual idea of God, it was a fixed principle that only a spiritual worship is well-pleasing to Him, and that all ceremonies [the reference is to the sacrifices, burnt offerings, incense and the like of Isa. i. 11, *sq.*] are abolished to the end that the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ may not have a man-made oblation." But as the Old Testament and the apostolic tradition made it equally certain that the worship of God is a sacrifice, the Christian worship of God was set forth under the aspect of a spiritual sacrifice. In the most general sense it was conceived as the offering of the heart and of obedience, as well as the consecration of the whole personality, body and soul (Rom. xii. 1) to God. In a more special sense prayer as thanksgiving and intercession was regarded as the sacrifice, which was to be accompanied, without constraint or ceremony, by fasts and acts of compassionating love. Finally, the prayers offered by the worshippers in the public worship of the community, and the gifts brought by them, out of which were taken the elements for the Lord's Supper, and which were used partly in the common meal, and partly in support of the poor, were regarded as sacrifice in the most special sense."<sup>1</sup>

The Lord's Supper was pre-eminently a "Eucharist"—a service of "*thanksgiving*"; and so it was felt appropriate that the worship in connection with it should take the form of *thankful* offerings; and this mode of describing the service became habitual in early times. The document known as *The Teaching of the Apostles*, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others, speak of it as an "offering" or "sacrifice," but in the spiritual sense just indicated. Thus Tertullian, after referring to the prophecy in Malachi, says: "It is of spiritual sacrifices God speaks," adding that

<sup>1</sup> Harnack's "Hist. of Dogma," Vol. I., p. 204, Engl. Trans.



"sacrifices of praise" are the sacrifices referred to.<sup>1</sup> In his work against Marcion, after citing the words of Malachi, "in every place sacrifice shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering," Tertullian adds: "Such as ascription of glory and blessing and praise, with hymns."<sup>2</sup> But although the words "offering," "sacrifice," and the like, were understood in a spiritual sense, I have no doubt Bishop Lightfoot is quite correct in supposing that it was this habit of representing the gifts and thanksgivings connected with the Eucharist as "sacrifices," and the fact that the offering of these sacrifices soon appeared as the act of the officiating minister, that led, towards the close of the second century, to his having the name of "priest" officially applied to him.

2. Second stage: rise of the monarchical bishop or single congregational pastor.

2. This brings us to the next step in the evolution of the official priest—the *rise of the monarchical bishop*. In the churches referred to in the Epistle of Clement of Rome, the *Didaché*, the Epistle of Polycarp, the *Pastor* of Hermas—in fact, in all the literature we possess prior to the middle of the second century, with the one exception of the Ignatian epistles—there is a plurality of presbyters or bishops in each church or little Christian community. After the middle of the century one of the number has in the churches generally risen to the position of permanent president over the others, and over the congregation, and becomes the bishop or pastor *par excellence*; but he remains for long simply the chief pastor of the local congregation or community. Various circumstances now combine to give the chief pastor or bishop increased importance, and to concentrate in him the functions which, hitherto, had been distributed among a number of officials. He presides at the public worship of the congregation, and presents their *prosphora* or offering; he has special charge of the sick and the poor; the finances of the church are under his control; he represents the congregation to the outside world. The whole congregational life and activity centre in him, and he is the visible sign of its unity. It falls to him primarily and chiefly to shield the community against the virulent Gnostic heresies, the Montanist protests, and the threatening troubles and persecutions of the time. On him also is generally, though not as yet universally, devolved the privilege and duty of ordaining the presbyters and deacons. He has already absorbed unto himself the influence which up till now belonged to the prophetic, charismatic ministry. The growing authority and power

<sup>1</sup> "Adv. Jud.," c. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Adv. Marc.," 4, c. 1.

with which he is invested, and especially the fact that he presided at the worship, administered the Eucharist, is described as attending at the "altar," and in a quasi-sacerdotal character presenting the gifts and offerings of the people, cannot be overlooked in tracing the chief factors which helped in the evolution of the official priest. In the *Sources of the Apostolic Canons*, edited by Harnack, and assigned by him to the second half of the second century, it is the bishop who is said to minister at "the altar"<sup>1</sup>—"one of the oldest passages, if not the very oldest, for the presence of an 'altar' in the Church" (Harnack).

It is specially significant that the rise of the monarchical episcopate, and the evolution of the idea of an official priesthood, were not only simultaneous, but had a stimulating influence on one another. The remarks of Neander, one of the profoundest, most deep-seeing, and most unbiassed of Church historians, are weighty and well worthy of note in this connection. He shows in his *Church History*<sup>2</sup> that "the altered view of the priesthood had no small influence on the development of the episcopal system. Thus does this change of the original constitution of the Christian communities stand intimately connected with another and still more radical change—the formation of a sacerdotal caste"—which he calls "an idea alien to the Christian economy," "foreign to the essence of that development of the kingdom of God which the New Testament sets forth."

Neander shows how the rise of the monarchical episcopate and the official priesthood reacted on one another.

"Out of the husk of Judaism," he goes on to point out, "Christianity had evolved itself to freedom and independence"—a work of liberation in which the Apostle Paul (he shows) had taken a leading and important part. But the Jewish principle thus vanquished in the first century pressed in once more from another quarter in the third century—that "investiture of the Christian spirit in an Old Testament form, which went on the assumption that an outward mediation, modelled after the Old Testament priesthood, was necessary." "It must be at once evident," says Neander, "how greatly such a false comparison of the Christian priesthood with the Jewish must have facilitated the evolution of the episcopate over the presbyterial office. In general, the more they degenerated from the evangelical to the Jewish point of view, the more must the original free constitution of the several churches become also changed.

<sup>1</sup> P. 23, Engl. Transl.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I., pp. 268 sq., Bohn's translation.

We find Cyprian, early as his date was, completely imbued with this intermixture of the Old and New Testament notions."

3. Third stage in the evolution: the episcopal office becomes an apostolic office, the bishop a successor of the apostles.

3. But before the name could be employed in its exclusive sacerdotal sense other closely related developments had to take place. Contemporaneously with the evolution that results in the application of the title to a special priestly caste other transformations have been going on. I have now to notice the third step in the development—a considerable step it was—when the episcopal office was transformed into an apostolic office.

In the earliest form in which the idea of "apostolic succession" appears it seems comparatively harmless. In reply to the Gnostic heresiarchs, who claimed that their doctrine was derived in a certain hidden way from the apostles, Irenæus pointed out that this claim of theirs had no foundation in fact, and would not bear examination, whereas they (the orthodox) could point to a succession of presbyters or bishops in the different churches coming down from the time of the apostles, and that through this succession they can trace the doctrine which they teach back to the apostles. Tertullian calls upon the heretics to produce what *he* can point to—their original records, and their roll of successive bishops through which the truth has come down to them. As thus put forward "apostolic succession" is not as yet thought of as a channel through which supernatural grace is conveyed from one bishop to another.

But another remark is in this connection made by Irenæus which suggests and soon leads to the promulgation of that idea. "Since God hath placed in the Church," he says, "first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, there, where the gifts of the Lord have been placed, it behoves us to learn the truth, that is, from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, men of blameless lives as well as of incorrupt teaching. It is incumbent upon us to obey the presbyters who are in the Church, those who possess the succession from the apostles, those who together with the succession of their office have received the certain gift of truth (*charisma veritatis*) according to the good pleasure of the Father."<sup>1</sup> Irenæus suggests that not only was the true doctrine transmitted through these successors of the apostles, but that by the Spirit of God they had been

<sup>1</sup> "Against Heresies," IV., 26, 2, 5.

endowed with a *charisma veritatis*, a special discernment in spiritual things, which enabled them both to apprehend and recognise the truth and to preserve and transmit it. There is no suggestion as yet of the transmission of supernatural grace generally through this succession, but the idea of an "apostolical succession" in connection with the episcopate, and of the transmission through it of a *charisma veritatis*, being once started, Tertullian has not yet passed away when the Roman bishops have begun to claim to be "successors of the apostles" in the fullest and largest sense—that grace and salvation are through them mediated to the Church.

4. It should be borne in mind, too, that "priesthood" and "sacrifice" are correlative terms, that the things they express condition one another, and act and react upon one another. Nothing is more striking in the literature of this period than their simultaneous *pari passu* development. The change in the idea attached to the term "priest" by Tertullian, who is the first, as I have said, to apply it to an official class, led to a corresponding change in the idea of sacrifice. Tertullian represents not only alms, but fasting, celibacy, martyrdom, and the like, as propitiatory offerings, which have the virtue of reconciling and propitiating an angry God.<sup>1</sup> They are spoken of as "satisfactions" made to God. And it is important to remember that the term "sacrifice" in the sense of propitiation is now applied very emphatically and specially to the Lord's Supper. The sacrifice offered is none other than the passion and death of our Lord. This, as we shall see more clearly in a moment, is fully brought out and emphasised by Cyprian.

4. Fourth stage: the sacrifice offered by the priest is propitiatory

5. We are now brought to the fifth stage in this momentous evolution, when the *power of the keys, absolution from sin, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and all needed grace* are conceived as transmitted from the apostles through the bishop, as successor of the apostles, and ministered by the priest ordained by him to the Church.

5. Fifth stage: the power of the keys, absolution from sin, with the gift of the Spirit and all needed grace.

The power of the keys, of remitting or retaining sin, of readmission or exclusion from the Church, is given in the New Testament, as we have seen, to the whole Christian community; even so late as the time of Tertullian this judicial function is still regarded as belonging to the community of Christians under the presidency of the *probati quique seniores*.<sup>2</sup> But what up till then had been

<sup>1</sup> See Harnack's "Hist. of Dogma," II., 132, Engl. Trans.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, "Apol." 39.

regarded as an act of the congregation, although on their behalf administered by the office-bearers, is now claimed as a special attribute received through the bishop. And more than that. It was held in the earlier time that the prerogative of forgiving sin absolutely pertained to God alone—that in the true and full sense none “can forgive sins but God only”—that the power given to the Church was the power to exclude offenders or restore on repentance to the fellowship of the Church; and that the power of absolution was simply *ministerial and declarative*, the power to assure all who repent and believe of the Divine forgiveness. But the claim which now begins to be advanced goes far beyond that, affirming that the Divine prerogative of forgiveness, of absolution even from the eternal penalty of sin, is conferred upon the bishop as God’s vicegerent, and through him on the priest ordained by him.

In the New Testament and up till now the idea also prevailed that the Holy Spirit was given to the Church as a whole. It is never suggested that He was given primarily to the apostles, and their successors in office, and through them mediated to the Church. He is given directly and immediately to the Church, to the Christian people. But the New Testament idea is now transformed into the dogma that the bishops as successors of the apostles and the high priests of God receive the Holy Spirit, Who is through them given to the Church; and, thus endowed, they proceed to assume prerogatives which even the apostles did not arrogate to themselves.

One of the first to claim these high prerogatives as a “successor of the apostles” was Callistus.

One of the first to claim for himself as bishop, and as a “successor of the apostles,” these high powers and prerogatives appears to have been Callistus, who became bishop of Rome about 218 A.D. We learn both from Tertullian and from Hippolytus that as “successor of the apostles” he presumed to grant that remission of sins which belongs to God only—nay, that he claimed to readmit men of gross and evil lives to the fellowship of the Church; and declared further that “even though a bishop were guilty of any sin, even the sin unto death, he ought not to be deposed.” “The complete adoption of the episcopal constitution” (Harnack says, and he includes the priesthood as part of that constitution) “coincided with the introduction of the unlimited right to forgive sins.” But the claim now put forward by Callistus was strenuously disputed. Tertullian sarcastically applies to him the epithet “apostolic,” and calls upon him to justify it. “Exhibit to me, apostolic

sir, prophetic evidences, that I may recognise your Divine virtue, and vindicate for yourself the power of remitting such sins. If, however, you have had the functions of discipline alone allotted to you, and of presiding not imperially but ministerially, who, or how great are you that you should grant indulgence?" Tertullian admits that the power of remission as a disciplinary function is given to the Church. "But the Church is properly and principally the Spirit Himself. The Spirit combines that Church which the Lord has made to consist of three persons. The Church, it is true, will thus forgive sins, but it will be the Church of the Spirit by means of a spiritual man, not the Church which consists of a number of bishops. For the right and arbitrament is the Lord's, not the servants'; God's own, and not the priests'." <sup>1</sup>

It is of interest to note, by the way, who this Callistus was, who appears to have been the first, or one of the first, to set up such lofty pretensions. Hippolytus gives us a detailed account of him in his *Philosophumena*, or *Refutation of all Heresies*, discovered in 1851.<sup>2</sup> Originally a slave in the service of a pious Christian, who belonged to the household of the Emperor, he embezzled a sum of money entrusted to him on behalf of a widow and orphans, and took to flight, but before he could escape by sea, as he tried to do, he was caught and sent to the treadmill. Some Christian friends were induced to procure his release on the plea that if set free he would restore the money he had stolen, but the money was not forthcoming, and, driven to desperation, it occurred to Callistus that he might extricate himself and recover his dilapidated reputation by playing the rôle of martyr. He deliberately disturbed the worship in a Jewish synagogue, crying, "I am a Christian." But when brought before the Roman prefect, he found himself confronted by his former master, who gave him the sort of character which members of the Royal Irish Constabulary give to previous acquaintances of theirs, and so the zealous, but too aspiring Callistus was scourged and sent to cool his religious ardour in the mines of Sardinia. But his consummate cleverness and cunning did not fail him even there. By bribes and a persuasive tongue he induced the officer charged with the duty of releasing certain prisoners to insert his name in the list. Returning to Rome he wormed himself into the favour of the weak and senile Bishop Zephyrinus, and on the death of Zephyrinus con-

The history  
of Callistus.

<sup>1</sup> "De Pudicitia," 21.

<sup>2</sup> See Book XI. cc. 6-7.

trived by corruption and intrigue and clever diplomatic skill to succeed him in the episcopate. It is not surprising, theologically ignorant as he was, that for a time he fell into the Patripassian heresy. Such was the gentleman, described by Hippolytus as "an impostor and a knave," who now raised the claim of being a "successor to the apostles" to the high pitch we have just seen, and who has been enrolled by the Church of Rome among her "saints and martyrs." It was only by the recovery of the *Philosophumena* of Hippolytus in recent times that his true character has been brought to light.

But even Hippolytus himself felt compelled by the example of Callistus and in self-defence to claim on his own behalf equally high prerogatives. "None," he says, "will refute these heretics save the Holy Spirit bequeathed unto the Church, which the apostles, having in the first instance received, have transmitted to those who rightly believe. But we, as being their successors, and as participators in this grace, high-priesthood, and office of teaching, as well as being guardians of the Church, will not be found deficient in vigilance."<sup>1</sup>

Such, then, were the circumstances in which this arrogant dogma was first promulgated in the Church.

6. Sixth stage: the theory of an official priesthood perfected and formulated by Cyprian. His ideal of priesthood stated.

6. We have now reached the sixth stage in the evolution, when Cyprian rounded out and formulated the theory of an official priesthood. All those characteristics of the professional priest mentioned at the beginning of this chapter are fully set out by Cyprian, and claimed by him as belonging primarily to the bishop as high priest, and transmitted to the priests ordained by him.

(1) As God's vicegerents and representatives the bishops are bearers of the Holy Spirit, whom they receive at ordination, and they alone are the "dispensatores Dei et Christi" to the congregation. They thus bring the people into actual communion with God, and outside the Church, which thus rests on the episcopate, there is no salvation.<sup>2</sup> We are here reminded of the altar-piece at Magdeburg, which made such an impression on the mind of Luther, and in which the Church was represented as a ship sailing heavenwards, with none on board but priests and monks, who are engaged in throwing ropes to the laity, who were all struggling in the water.

(2) As the vicegerents of God and of Christ, the bishops

<sup>1</sup> "Philosophumena." Proemium.

<sup>2</sup> Epp. iv. 4; xxxiii. 1; lix. 5; lxvi. 3, 4; lxxv.; "De Unit.," 4.

have received the power of the keys, have authority to judge in Christ's stead, and they alone can withhold or grant absolution from sin.<sup>1</sup>

(3) These high functions the bishop fulfils as a "successor of the apostles," and as receiving his authority from God Himself. "God speaks through His bishops" (Cyprian says) "as He formerly spoke through the apostles, and every act of the Church is founded on the bishops."<sup>2</sup> He habitually calls them "priests," "high priests," and applies the statements in the Old Testament with respect to the duties, privileges, and responsibilities of the Aaronic priests to the Christian office-bearers. To disregard the priest is to be guilty of the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

(4) But we have seen that the development of the ideas of priesthood and sacrifice went on simultaneously. This simultaneous double development is specially manifest in Cyprian. He carries the idea of sacrifice, especially in connection with the Eucharist, farther than any of his predecessors. He calls it "*the sacrifice*"; "*sacrificare*," "*sacrificium celebrare*," mean for Cyprian to celebrate the Lord's Supper. It is by pre-eminence "the sacrifice of the Lord." "The bishop, as the priest of God," he says, "does that which Jesus Christ our Lord and God, the Founder and Teacher of this sacrifice, did and taught."<sup>3</sup> "That priest truly discharges the office of Christ who imitates what Christ did, and he offers a full and true sacrifice in the Church of God and the Father when he proceeds to offer it according to what he sees Christ Himself offered." "The Lord's passion," he affirms in the most explicit terms, "is the sacrifice which we offer."<sup>4</sup> And Cyprian carries still farther the idea that we have seen in Tertullian that by means of alms, fasting, and the like, we may propitiate and appease God, when His wrath has been incensed by sin, even mortal sin. Such actions are described as "*merita*" by him, and bear the character of "satisfactions" and "atonements."<sup>5</sup>

Well thus might Bishop Lightfoot say: "As Cyprian crowned the edifice of episcopal power, so also was he the first to put forward without relief or disguise these sacerdotal assumptions; and so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them that nothing was left to his

<sup>1</sup> Ep. lxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. xxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. lxxiii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Epp. lix. 18; lxi. 2; lxxiii. 7, 14; lxvi. 5; lxxiii.

<sup>5</sup> See his "De Op. et Eleemos.," 3; "De Lapsis," 35, 36.



successors, but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language."

The foregoing changes bring others in their train.

7. Such a profound transformation as that from the priesthood of all believers, which gave all Christians equal access to the Most High and equal power in the Church, to the principle of a special sacerdotal caste, through whom alone access was enjoyed, and grace communicated—such a fundamental change could not take place without bringing with it other corresponding changes which in a great measure revolutionised and reversed the constitution given to the Church by the apostles. It concentrated in the clergy, and especially in the hierarchy, that power and those privileges which were originally given to the Church as a whole.

(a) Terms applied in the New Testament to all Christians now confined to the priesthood.

(a) It is deeply significant that the radical reaction that practically confined the privilege of priesthood to a sacerdotal caste similarly narrowed and restricted to that caste the use of terms which in the New Testament are applied to all Christians. For example, the word "*κλήρος*" which in i. Pet. v. 3 is applied to the Christian people generally has now engrafted on it the unevangelical sense of including only the office-bearers. In the New Testament, and with the apostles, all Christians are God's "clergy" (*κλήροι*) ; in Tertullian and from his time onward this term is confined to the ministry,<sup>1</sup> which is now also designated by the terms "*ordo*" "*ordo sacerdotalis*."

(b) While the privileges of the sacerdotal order are extended those of the Christian people are curtailed.

(b) And just in proportion as the privileges of the "*ordo sacerdotalis*" are enlarged those of the Christian people are curtailed and diminished. In the New Testament there is so little of what may be called the "clerical" spirit that the ordinary members of the Church have no special designation to distinguish them from the office-bearers. Towards the end of the second century the word "*πλήθος*" occurs in the *Sources of the Apostolic Canons* as the technical name of the congregation ; and the word "*λαϊκός*" appears in the same document. "Let the layman confine himself to the work of the laity yielding obedience to those who sit at the altar."<sup>2</sup> These words, or corresponding Latin words, are used habitually by Tertullian and Cyprian.

(c) In the New Testament consecration extends to the humblest calling ; later the clergy are debarred

(c) At the same time and as part of the same development a narrow and altogether false conception of the range of the spiritual and religious life makes its appearance. In the New Testament idea consecration extends, or should extend, to the whole of life, with all its occupations and

<sup>1</sup> "De Monog.," c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Sources," etc., p. 23.

engagements.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the great apostle such common work as hair-cloth making was found not incompatible with the highest spiritual-mindedness and devotion. Accordingly, in the early time the Christian ministry engage in all sorts of worldly employments. We hear of them cultivating farms, keeping banks and shops, acting as physicians, shepherds, smiths, and artificers of all kinds. We read of one bishop who was a weaver, of another who tended sheep on the mountains of Cyprus, of another who practised in the law courts, of one presbyter who was a silversmith, of another who was an innkeeper.<sup>2</sup> In the early Christian literature we find no trace of the idea that the pursuit of a secular calling was incongruous with the office of the Christian ministry. Quite the contrary. When the Montanists proposed to pay a fixed salary to their ministers the proposal was condemned as an innovation alien to Catholic usage. But soon, as an outcome of the new sacerdotal spirit, all this was changed. Before the end of the third century the clergy are forbidden to engage in "secular" employments.<sup>3</sup> Their withdrawal from such occupations was in fact a tide-mark in the progress of sacerdotalism.

And very singular it is that the Church is herein following a course which has been already taken in the pagan institution of priesthood. In his very learned and interesting volume on *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* Professor Sir Samuel Dill has some striking statements on this subject. He says: "The sacerdotal colleges of the Latin religion were never, except in the case of the Vestals, separated from ordinary life. The highest pontificate was held by busy laymen, by consuls or emperors or great soldiers. After the performance of his part in some great rite, the Roman priest returned to his civic place and duties." In Greece at first even the priesthood of Isis is held only for a year or even for a month. But a little later all this is changed. The chief priest at Cenchreae, "bearing the sacred name of Mithra . . . has given up ordinary civic life . . . every day two solemn services have to be performed in the temple, besides the private direction of souls, which had evidently become a regular part of the priestly functions. Attached to the great temples and close to the altar there is a 'clergy house' where the ministers are

from  
engaging in  
secular em-  
ployments.

Separation  
of pagan  
priesthood  
from the  
world  
followed by  
the new  
Catholic  
priesthood :  
Sir S. Dill  
quoted.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 24; x. 31; Col. iii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> See Hatch's "Bampton Lectures," pp. 147 sq.

<sup>3</sup> See Cyprian, Ep. lxvi.; Canon 18 of the Council of Elvira; and the "Instructiones of Commodian," c. 69.

lodged . . . the priesthood is no longer a secondary concern ; it absorbs a man's whole life, sets him apart within the sanctuary as the dispenser of sacred privileges, with the awful power of revealing the mystery of eternity, and preparing souls to meet the great ordeal."<sup>1</sup> In the Isis priesthood and in the Egyptian Serapis worship there is the same separation of the clergy from the world.<sup>2</sup> " In these alien rites (the people) found a new religious atmosphere. The priest set apart from the world, with his life-long obligations, and the daily offices in the shrine, becomes in some way a minister to the spiritual life of his flock. In a temple of Magna Mater, Isis or Mithra in the reign of Julian, we are far away from the worship of the Lares. We are travelling towards the spiritual mystery and sacramental consolations of the mediæval Church."<sup>3</sup> But very interesting and suggestive it is to see the increased separation from the world of the pagan priesthood reproduced in the new Christian priesthood.

In the New Testament the highest sanctity is seen in the family life : later it is seen in celibacy.

(d) For the same reason, and in order to secure as far as possible that separation which was thought desirable, and to deepen and intensify the sacerdotal spirit, clerical celibacy also begins to be enjoined, and it is thus sought to detach the clergy as far as possible from domestic and social connections and relationships. So far-reaching in its issues and ramifications is the adoption of a false principle.

Such, then, were the successive steps in the evolutionary process by which the Christian ministry—the pastors and teachers or presbyter-bishops of the New Testament—became a mediating sacrificing priesthood. The remarks of one of the most learned and able of Church historians, Dr. Gwatkin, the late Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge, on this subject, are weighty, and his irony well-deserved : " Now that the ministry of gifts was at an end, the official ministry seemed the one mediator with an absent King, the one power that could bring Him back to bless His Church ; so they began to magnify their office ; and they did well, if Christ is not with the two or three, unless they are gathered in the bishop's name. Step by step, from this age onward, Christ's minister is advanced forsooth to a dignity Christ never gave him. First, he is turned into a priest to offer sacrifices, then a material sacrifice is invented for him to offer, then the whole work of

Dr. Gwatkin's caustic remarks on the evolution.

<sup>1</sup> " Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius," p. 582.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 576 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 546.

the Spirit is shut up in his ministrations. No grace but in the visible Church, no salvation outside it. Nothing remained but to compel them to come in. The entire mediæval system from the papacy downward is no more than a natural development of the unbelief which knows no working of the Spirit but one transmitted by outward ordinances from a distant past, and to this development the failure of Montanism gave a greater impulse than the defeat of the Gnostics, or the conversion of Constantine." <sup>1</sup> As Dr. Gwatkin says elsewhere: "Cyprian's conception of the Christian ministry differs entirely from St. Paul's, and Chrysostom's idea of priesthood is the same as Julian's. The assimilation of Christianity to heathenism from the third century is matter of history, and we need not here enquire how far it was due to borrowing on one or on both sides, or how far it was a similar growth of the religion of the natural man. The one thing certain is that, however historically unavoidable it might be, it was in most respects rather a reversal of Christ's plain teaching than a development of principle laid down by Him." <sup>2</sup>

The question—What were the chief causative influences under which the evolution we have traced took place?—has been, as we have proceeded, already answered in effect. It is manifest, we think, that there was at least a double influence at work quickening and stimulating the rise and growth of a special sacerdotal caste in the Church.

Causative  
influences  
of the  
evolution.

I. To a careful and candid student of the period it will be obvious, we believe, that a primary and powerful influence came from that heathen sacerdotalism under the spell of which the vast majority of those who became Christians had grown up from childhood, and brought with them into the Church. And the form of pagan sacerdotalism that was now dominant and popular should be carefully noted. To realise the state of things to which the great majority of those who passed over to the Church were habituated while still heathen—the religious atmosphere in which they moved, and the priestly offices they had learned to value—we cannot do better than turn to the pages from which I have already quoted—the two volumes of Sir S. Dill, on *Roman Society* in the period with which we are concerned.

I. Heathen  
sacerdo-  
talism.

"He would ill interpret the religious history of the time," Sir S. Dill on the potent pagan sacer-  
dotalism.  
says Sir Samuel, "who should confine his attention to the

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin's "Early Church History," Vol. I., p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 269.

official paganism. The paganism which was really living, which stirred devotion and influenced souls, was that neither of Latium nor of Hellas. It came from the East—from Persia, Syria, Egypt—the homes of a conception of religion which was alien to the native spirit both of Greece and Rome. These Oriental cults satisfied emotional cravings which found no stimulus for devotion in the arid abstractions of the old Latin creed, or in the brilliant anthropomorphism of Greece. In their mysteries, if they did not teach a higher morality, they raised the worshipper above the level of cold conventional conformity, and satisfied in some way the longing for communion with the Deity, and assurance of a life beyond the grave.”<sup>1</sup> And profoundly significant it is that, as Sir Samuel Dill shows, “the religions which captivated the ages that preceded the triumph of the Catholic Church, while they strove to satisfy the deeper needs of the spirit, were *more intensely sacerdotal*, and more highly organised than the old religions of Greece and Rome. Probably no small part of their strength lay in sacramental mystery, and an occult sacred lore which was the monopoly of a class set apart from the world. Inscriptions mention an *ordo sacerdotum*; and Tertullian speaks of a high pontiff of Mithra, and of holy virgins and persons vowed to continence in his service. The priestly functions were more constant and exacting than those of the old priestly colleges of Greece and Rome. There were solemn sacraments and complicated rites of initiation to be performed. Three times a day—at dawn, noon, and evening—the litany of the sun was recited. Daily sacrifice was offered at the altars of various gods, with chanting and music. The climax of the solemn office was probably marked by the sounding of a bell. The seventh day of the week was sacred to the sun, the sixteenth of each month to Mithra, and the 25th of December, as marking the sun’s entrance on a new course of triumph, was the great festival of Mithra’s sacred year. Initiation in the mysteries, after many rites of cleansing and trial, was the crowning privilege of the Mithraist believer.”<sup>2</sup> Again: “The oriental religions of the imperial period were distinguished from the native religion of Latium by the possession of a numerous and highly organised priesthood, and an intensely sacerdotal spirit. In an age of growing religious

Its characteristic and more numerous and highly organised priesthood, and an intensely sacerdotal spirit.

<sup>1</sup> “Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire,” by Sir S. Dill, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Dill’s “Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius,” p. 610.

faith this characteristic gave them enormous power. The priest became a necessary medium of intercourse with God. It is also one of the many traits in the later paganism which prepared and softened the transition to the reign of the mediæval Church." <sup>1</sup>

And there is no doubt the multitudinous Christian converts carried with them much from their old to their new faith. "In the syncretism of that age, the age of gnosticism, rites and doctrines passed easily from one system to another. Mithra certainly absorbed much from kindred worships of Asia Minor, from Hellenic mysteries, and from Alexandrian philosophy. It is equally certain that the Church did not disdain a policy of accommodation, along with the consecration of altars to Christ in the old shrines of paganism. The cult of local heroes was transferred to saints and martyrs. Converts found it hard to part with consecrated phrases and forms of devotion, and might address Jesus in epithets sacred to the sun. . . . In their offices and sacramental system the two religions had a more real affinity. Mithra had his baptism and confirmation of new disciples, his ablutions, ascetic preparation for the sacred mysteries, and holy feasts of the consecrated bread and wine, where the mystic draught gave purity and life to soul and body, and was the passport to a life in God. The sacerdotal and liturgical character of his worship, with its striking symbolism, using to the full the emotional effects of lights and music and sacred pomp, offered to souls, who were ripe for a diviner faith, some of that magical charm which was to be exerted over so many ages by the Catholic Church." <sup>2</sup>

The Church did not disdain a policy of accommodation.

Again: "The daily ritual of Isis, which seems to have been as regular and complicated as that of the Catholic Church, produced an immense effect on the Roman mind. Every day there were two solemn offices at which white-robed, tonsured priests, with acolytes and assistants of every degree, officiated. The morning litany and sacrifice was an impressive service. The crowd of worshippers thronged the space before the chapel at the early dawn. The priest, ascending by a hidden stair, drew apart the veil of the sanctuary, and offered the holy image to their adoration. He then made the round of the altars, reciting the litany, and sprinkling the holy water 'from the sacred spring.'" <sup>3</sup> Referring to Isis Sir S. Dill says again: "The

The pagan ceremonies show a singular rapprochement to those of the Catholic Church.

<sup>1</sup> Dill's "Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius," p. 580.

<sup>2</sup> "Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius," pp. 622, 623.

<sup>3</sup> "Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire,"

ceremonies of her worship, which in many respects show a singular *rapprochement* to those of the Catholic Church, had a powerful effect on the imagination and the feelings. There is a sacerdotal class set apart for spiritual functions and the guidance of souls, and distinguished by the tonsure and a peculiar dress. There are baptismal rites of initiation, for which ascetic abstinence is a necessary preparation. In Egypt on the very ground which in the fourth and fifth centuries was to be the home of Christian monks, there was long before them the ascetic life of the cloister devoted to the worship of Serapis. The ritual has many traces of our modern ideas of devotion, and foreshadows in some respects that of the Catholic Church.”<sup>1</sup>

The Church carries on the tradition of pagan Rome.

Hence, as Sir S. Dill states: “Long after the external rites of heathenism had been suppressed, the pagan tone and spirit retained its hold on men’s imaginations. . . . In this, as in other respects, the Church carried on the tradition of pagan Rome. . . . The cycle of the Christian year was in many points adapted to the pagan calendar. The cult of saints and martyrs was established at the very altars where incense had been burnt to Mars or Bacchus. At Naples lamps burning before the image of the Virgin took the place of those before the family gods. The worship of the Virgin mother weaned the Sicilian peasant from the worship of a goddess of less immaculate fame.”

The Church leaders born and brought up in a sacerdotal religion.

Most significant, too, it is that the men under whose auspices sacerdotal forms became prevalent and popular in Christian Church circles were men who had been brought up from childhood in the use of these forms, and unable to dissociate religion from priesthood and priestly terms and symbols. We have seen how in the apostolic age the husks of Judaism were thrown off and discarded, especially through the work and influence of the great apostle to the Gentiles; but now we have to note how its discarded sacerdotal ideas and terminology come back in the third century through the influence of leaders brought up in a sacerdotal religion. Educated and trained as they had been, for them to conceive of a religion without priesthood and priestly sacrifice would be well-nigh impossible. Both the great ecclesiastical leaders under whom the sinister development seems to have matured and ripened had grown up not only to manhood, but to middle life in heathenism, had been trained as Roman lawyers, and had only just

<sup>1</sup> “Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire,” p. 66.

emerged from paganism and pagan associations when they became great and influential leaders in the Church. It is true that Tertullian was not a sacerdotalist in the narrow sense of the word. The spiritual ideas of the New Testament are predominant in his thought, and ultimately move him to cast in his lot with the Montanists, and the broader, more evangelical basis of the New Testament Church is clear before his mind. I have already quoted the passage beginning, "Are not we laymen priests," etc., which shows this. But he is so steeped in the atmosphere of sacerdotalism, so acclimatised in it, that its language comes natural to him; he is the first to apply the terms "priest" and "priesthood" to the Christian ministry, and he does it freely and as a matter of course. As to Cyprian, he was close on fifty years old at his conversion; had been, as Jerome informs us, a warm defender of the pagan faith in which he had been reared, and within two years of his baptism he became bishop of Carthage. These men were so familiar with sacrifices, lustrations, and other heathen rites in connection with the family, the club, and the state, for the celebration of which priests were necessary, and their minds were so imbued and saturated with both the ideas and the language of sacerdotalism, that they would seem indispensable. Accordingly, the greatest and most eminent modern Church historians, not only brilliant scholars, famed for exceptional work in research, like Hatch and Harnack, but men distinguished as much for soundness of judgment and sobriety of thought as for profound erudition, like Bishop Lightfoot and Dr. Gwatkin, are convinced that the pagan sacerdotalism, still ingrained in the converts from heathenism, had a most important if unconscious influence on the rapid growth of sacerdotalism in the Church.

Nor should it be forgotten that the Church soon began consciously to copy the imperial organisation, and that the bishops in the growing authority and powers vested in them were made to correspond more and more with the governors of provinces. And more than this. The Church soon began also to copy the pagan priestly hierarchy, which had the Emperor at its head as Pontifex-Maximus at Rome, and its metropolitans in every province. It has been proved that the Church followed the pagan religious hierarchy in at least two particulars, namely, in the differences introduced into the ranks of bishops, and in the multiplication of the lower orders of clergy. A French writer, Desjardins, has shown that the pagan hierarchical

The imperial organisation and the pagan priestly hierarchy copied.



organisation was everywhere the forerunner of the Christian ; and Mommsen affirms that " the conquering Christian Church took its hierarchic weapons from the arsenal of the enemy." <sup>1</sup> Harnack has shown that " the position taken by the higher clergy corresponded closely with the mystagogue in heathen religions " ; and Tertullian himself recognises the heathen colouring given to the episcopal office by sarcastically applying the title " pontifex maximus " to the Roman bishop. It is remarkable that the process of assimilation was anticipated in Gnostic circles, that among the Gnostics grace and absolution were conferred only through the mystagogue, and that the distinction between the priestly mystagogues and laymen was final in certain Gnostic societies. <sup>2</sup> The similarity between the rites and ideas now associated with the Christian sacraments, and the magical effects attributed to them, and the pagan mysteries of Isis or Mithra, strikes Tertullian, who is much perplexed by the resemblance, and thinks the devil had a hand in it, in which perhaps he was not far wrong. That there was plainly a remodelling of the ritual in imitation of the ancient mysteries and of the heathen sacrificial system Harnack declares to be " a fact admitted by Protestant scholars of all parties."

2. Cyprian would fain derive the new development from Jewish priesthood and sacrifice.

2. Such, then, was the part played by heathen sacerdotalism on that sinister development which began to appear in the Church at the end of the second and beginning of the third century. There was, of course, a strong natural reluctance on the part of the Christian leaders to concede that this new sacerdotal development, now for the first time appearing in the Church, was in any sense due to heathen influence. They are fain rather to represent the pagan sacerdotal rites to have been due to imitation of the Church ritual brought about by the agency and tutelage of the daemons ; the weakness of which contention appears from the fact that it is only about the end of the second and the opening of the third century that the new official sacerdotalism appears in the Church. The Christian leaders are so obsessed by the sacerdotal ideas and rites in which as heathen they have been born and nurtured that Paul's teaching and the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews with regard to Jewish priesthood and sacrifice are quite ignored by them, and in spite of that teaching they find the justification of the new sacerdotalism, and its fitting

<sup>1</sup> " The Provinces of the Roman Empire," I., 349.

<sup>2</sup> See Harnack's " History of Dogma," II., 128.

terminology in Jewish priesthood and the Jewish sacrificial institutions. As Bishop Westcott very truly remarks: "The writings of Cyprian mark a new stage in the development of ecclesiastical thought and language. In them the phraseology of the Levitical law is transferred to Christian institutions. The correspondence between the old system and the new is no longer generally that of the external and material to the inward and spiritual, but of one outward to another." Bishop Westcott then proceeds to show how in his Ep. lxxii. 2 Cyprian applies the Levitical language of Lev. xxi. 21, of Exod. xix. 22, and of Exod. xxviii. 43 to Christian ministers and institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Jewish  
priesthood  
and sacri-  
fice pleaded  
in justifica-  
tion, and its  
phraseology  
adopted.

Bishop Lightfoot very justly suggests that "it was not a safe nomenclature which assigned the term 'sacerdos' and the like to the ministry as a special designation." Certainly, "it was not a safe nomenclature." The history of the Church has amply proved the truth of that remark. The term "priest" and other kindred forms were taken over into the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* from the mediæval Service Books, the Missal, the Breviary, and the Ritual. Strenuous efforts were made by the more advanced reformers to have them eliminated, but they were allowed to remain. When Elizabeth ascended the throne, most of the reformers who had been exiled under Mary returned with a strong desire for a further and more thorough reformation. But Elizabeth would not hear of it. Many of the clergy and the people were still attached to the old faith and forms, and it was argued that too abrupt an abandonment of the rites and forms to which they had been accustomed would alienate not a few, and drive them back to the Roman fold. The more advanced reformers strongly urged that the danger lay in the opposite direction. "If we compel the godly to conform to the Papists," said Dean Whittingham, "I fear greatly lest we fall into Papism ourselves." This indeed was the secret hope of the more astute Romanists. "An they but sup our broth they will soon eat our beef," was the memorable saying of Bishop Bonner. How often has the saying been verified since then! how strikingly in the rise of sacerdotalism under Laud! how notably in its recrudescence in our own time!

An unsafe  
nomencla-  
ture.

<sup>1</sup> Westcott on "Epistle to the Hebrews," Additional Note, p. 458.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE MONK

#### I. *The Source and Genesis of the Monastic Ideal*

The rise and rapid spread of monasticism due to a supposed antagonism between matter and spirit and the belief that evil is associated with matter and is overcome only by ascetic mortification of the flesh.

THE rise and rapid spread of monasticism is one of the most remarkable phenomena in early Church history. There can be no doubt that its birth and singularly rapid diffusion over both East and West were due in great measure to the prevalent philosophic sentiment of the time, which profoundly effected the Christian thought and life of that age, and created a "psychological climate," which acted like the air of a hothouse on the extraordinary ascetic product which now grew up rankly in it. This was the doctrine that there exists an irreconcilable antagonism between matter and spirit, body and soul, that evil is inseparably connected with matter, and can be escaped only by an ascetic mortification of the flesh. This belief was then everywhere prevalent. Not only did it underlie Brahmanism and Buddhism, and the teaching of the monk-priests of Serapis in Egypt, it had dominated Western thought through the Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy; in the third and fourth centuries it was popularised and extended by means of neo-Platonism; whilst it lay at the basis of Gnosticism and Manichæism. "The theory that was the supreme principle of pagan philosophy," says Sohms, "that the subjection of the bodily passions through detachment from the body can alone lead the spirit of the wise man to God—this theory took captive the Christian world also. Asceticism was now declared to be a duty of life; nay, more, to be the highest duty of life, inasmuch as it was a means to the vision and possession of God. Monasticism arose in the moment when this thought was shared by the masses of the people, and multitudes withdrew into the solitude of the deserts that they might make asceticism the calling of their life."<sup>1</sup>

"The uncommonly speedy expansion of this new mode

<sup>1</sup> "Outlines of Church History," by Rudolf Sohms, Eng. Trans., p. 66.

of life" (Moeller says) "is only explained by the fact that in Egypt and the East a powerful popular disposition of dualistic and religious sort, which so far had nothing Christian in it . . . came to meet the specific Christian impulses to an ascetic life, and that these found a broad soil in the freedom from needs and the oppressed social position both of the Egyptian and the rural Oriental population."<sup>1</sup>

The monks that now swarmed in Egypt and in Syria, though Christian in name, were thus no new phenomenon. They had many predecessors, their exact counterpart, in the great heathen religions. From time immemorial Hindoo monks, yogis and fakirs, or gymnosophists (naked philosophers), as the Greeks called them, lived (and still live) in celibacy and self-mortification, in woods, caves and mountains, sleeping on the bare ground, standing all day on tiptoe, savage and barbarous in appearance, yet revered by the people. The Buddhist monks were (and are) less fanatical than the Hindoo fakirs, but with their vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience, their self-scourging and other disciplines, their convents and nunneries, they bore such a close resemblance to the monks of the Latin Church that the early Roman Catholic missionaries could only explain the former as a diabolical imitation of the latter! Even the Pythagoreans had a sort of monastic society; while the worship of Serapis in his great temple at Memphis—one of the greatest and most celebrated of Egyptian institutions—had its familiar monk-priests. "In Egypt," as Sir Samuel Dill points out, "on the very ground which in the fourth and fifth centuries was to be the home of Christian monks, there was long before them the ascetic life of the cloister devoted to the worship of Serapis. The ritual has many traces of our modern ideas of devotion, and foreshadows in some respects that of the Catholic Church. There are matins and vespers to rouse the goddess or to lay her to rest at which white-robed priests officiate."<sup>2</sup> The roots of Christian monasticism were thus deep in the soil of that dualistic view of the world which prevailed everywhere, both East and West; and Christian monks were only a feeble copy and caricature of the monks of Brahma, Buddha, and Serapis.

The monks had their forerunner in the great heathen religions.

But the inclination to a celibate, ascetic mode of life, due

The impulse to an ascetic life reinforced by other causes,

<sup>1</sup> Moeller's "History of the Church," Vol. I., p. 359.

<sup>2</sup> "Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire," p. 66, with note.

such as the  
disturbed  
state of the  
Empire.

primarily to the dualistic view of the world then so dominant and widespread, was now reinforced by other facts and considerations—such as the disturbed and unsettled state of things existing throughout the Empire. It was a time of conflict and trouble, panic and misery, caused by the great barbarian invasions, and the fierce and cruel persecutions to which the Christians were being subjected. To escape present and impending calamities and oppressions and obtain rest and quietude, as well as a better opportunity of spiritual self-culture, multitudes fled to the desert, which in many cases also offered, as has been pointed out, a secure refuge for slaves fleeing from their masters, for criminals desiring to evade the consequence of their crimes, and for citizens who sought relief from those heavy fiscal burdens which in the corrupt and oppressive administration of the Empire had become intolerable. There is no reason to doubt, however, that in the greater number the higher and purer motives predominated, and that they fled from the world to the wilderness in the hope of realising what they regarded as the highest ideal of life.

Its later  
advocates  
seek a sup-  
port in  
Biblical  
teaching.

Of course the later advocates of the monastic ideal endeavoured to find a point of attachment, and whatever justification was possible, in Biblical teaching. A sort of theology of monasticism was created by men like Jerome. The examples of Elijah and Elisha in the Old Testament and of John the Baptist in the New are constantly referred to, as well as the poverty of Christ, and His words to the rich young ruler: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." But our Lord Himself was not an anchorite, nor a cenobite, nor an ascetic of any sort, but came "eating and drinking," moving freely in the world, and in the company of His friends and fellows, both men and women. Not a trace of monkish austerity or ascetic self-mortification is to be found either in His life or teaching; and if now and then He did retire to the solitude of the mountain or the desert, it was for meditation and communion with His Father, and only for a brief season, to come back immediately to the society of His disciples and friends. Monasticism was at variance with the central spirit of His teaching, which did not encourage men to run away from the world, but to remain in it, and to cleanse, transform, and glorify the whole relations and occupations of life, by animating and transfiguring them with the Christian spirit: "I pray not that

But with-  
out justi-  
fication.

thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." <sup>1</sup>

The life of the hermit indeed, concerned as it is confessedly with his own personal well-being, is a negation of, and at variance with, that love which "seeketh not her own," whose very essence lies in concern for and devotion to the well-being of others, and which the whole New Testament represents as central and fundamental in Christianity and in the Christian life.

And this was emphatically true of the family and the social relations. There is not a word in the New Testament to suggest that life in the family and in society is less holy, less pleasing to God than the celibate ascetic life of the emaciated monk in the desert solitude. There is a great deal to the contrary. There is no more sacred or hallowed institution to the apostle Paul than that of marriage. When he wants a symbol of the mystical holy union between Christ and the Church he finds the best image of it in the marriage union between the husband and the wife, while the Christian family as pictured by him is the nursery of the purest, sweetest, and most beautiful Christian virtues,<sup>2</sup> and as a matter of fact one of the first and greatest achievements of Christianity in the opening centuries of its history was to reform, purify, and elevate the family life in all its relations. Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats the apostle brands as "doctrines of demons."<sup>3</sup> In its original and essential features monasticism was not only a one-sided discipline of the individual, largely in violation of natural feelings and instincts perfectly lawful in themselves, it struck a serious and damaging blow at the divine institution of the family, at the established social order, and even at the legitimate claims and interests of the State. Hence in the year 365 a law of the Emperor Valens<sup>4</sup> required that those persons who in Egypt deserted the cities, and on pretext of religion joined the societies of monks in the wilderness, should be arrested by the *comes orientis* and compelled to fulfil their civic obligations, or to dispose of their property to relations who would discharge the functions devolving on them.

There seems no reason to doubt, then, that the primary impulse to monasticism, and the most powerful incentive to it, came from the predominant philosophic thought of the time just indicated. It is particularly to be observed

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 1-6.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. v. 18-33; Col. iii. 16-23.

<sup>4</sup> Cod. Theodos. XII., 1, 63.

that the cradle of monasticism was Egypt, where for centuries the great heathen Serapeum of Alexandria (with the famous Alexandrian Library attached), and the scarcely less celebrated or magnificent Serapeum at Memphis, with its group of temples sacred to Astarte, Æsculapius and Serapis, had made the people familiar with the principles referred to, and where, according to Revillout and Weingarten, Pachomius, the chief promoter of the system, had himself, before his conversion to Christianity, been a monk of Serapis.

Although it may take us aside somewhat from our main theme, it will be convenient to notice here a further evolution that was brought about chiefly through the influence of the monks—the celibacy of the secular clergy.

The celibacy of the secular clergy brought about by the same causes, and especially by the influence of the monks.

The interpretation put upon 1 Tim. iii. 2, led in the second century to the prohibition of second marriages among the clergy generally. In the third century a step in advance was taken, when it was held to be improper for them to continue marital intercourse after ordination. But the earliest legislation on the subject appears in the 33rd Canon of the provincial Council of Elvira in Spain (A.D. 306), which prohibited bishops, priests, and deacons, and, in short, all the clergy employed in the service of the altar, who were married at the time of their ordination, to continue to live in conjugal intercourse with their wives.<sup>1</sup> According to Socrates, Sozomen, and Gelasius, the Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325) desired to pass a similar law, but as the result of an earnest appeal by Paphnutius, an Egyptian bishop of high repute, it was held sufficient if those who had been ordained without being married were prohibited from marrying afterwards, but those who had been married only once (before ordination) were not to be separated from their wives. The second Trullan Council (A.D. 692) forbade second marriages to all the clergy, but allowed a single marriage to priests, if contracted before consecration. Such was the law in the Greek Church, but in the Latin Church the law of the Synod of Elvira was held to be binding, and a decretal of Siricius, the Roman bishop (A.D. 385), insisted on the celibacy of bishops, priests, and deacons, as did also Pope Leo the Great. Yet even in Italy, Gaul and Spain these injunctions were widely evaded from the first, and by-and-by (as in Germany, where the inferior clergy were generally married) the law was strenuously opposed and

<sup>1</sup> See Hefele's "Hist. of Christian Councils" on Canon 33 of Synod of Elvira.

resisted ; indeed, all along from the time of Pope Siricius through the mediæval period the canons of Councils and the decrees of Popes were " defied, infringed, eluded " ; the open or secret concubinage of the clergy became widely prevalent, and unnatural lust, fornication and adultery among them notorious and scandalous—the natural results of unnatural restrictions. The early legislation had practically become a dead letter ; and there were no worse offenders than many of the Popes themselves. Later when we come to deal with the evolution of the papacy under Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), we shall have occasion to note the drastic measures taken by him to impose the monastic ideal of celibacy on all the clergy.

## II. *Stages in the Evolution*

In the gradual evolution of monasticism into its later and more matured forms four stages may be noted.

I. The first stage is that in which a severe asceticism is practised by individual Christians, like Origen, without external separation from their homes and families. History clearly indicates the influence under which an asceticism far beyond anything in the New Testament found its way into the Church. Tatian, a disciple of Justin Martyr, under the spell of Greek and Oriental thought, and the dualistic conception of spirit and matter already referred to, rejected marriage altogether as a service of the devil, abstained from flesh, and used water instead of wine in the Lord's Supper, his followers being known as Encratites or Aquarians. Under the same influence he was led to adopt certain Gnostic principles. There were others who stopped short of this hyper-asceticism, who nevertheless under the same influence went far beyond Scripture teaching. Athenagoras, the Athenian Christian philosopher, who addressed an apology to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, under the spell of the Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy, with its opposition of spirit and sense, regards virginity and celibacy as a higher condition than the married state and more conducive to communion with God, and refers to many Christians who acted on this principle. " You would find many among us, both men and women," he says, " growing old unmarried in the hope of living in closer communion with God." " A second marriage," he adds, " is only a specious adultery." <sup>1</sup> Montanism and

In the first stage of the evolution individuals practise asceticism without separation from their families.

<sup>1</sup> " Presbeia," of Athenagoras, c. 33.



the Montanist Tertullian took the same view. Many Christians remain unmarried, and a class of ascetics begin to appear, and to increase in number, like Origen and Hieracas, whose minds were also deeply imbued with the Hellenic philosophy, and who, without external separation from their friends, practised an austere asceticism. Already Hieracas at the end of the third century has gathered around him a society of ascetics who live the life of Ἐγκρατεία which is to him the new and vital element which Christ has introduced. This, then, is the first stage in the evolution.

In the second stage the hermit withdraws to the solitude of the desert to live alone an austere, self-mortifying life.

2. The second stage may be designated *eremitic* monasticism—that in which the hermit (from ἐρημία, the desert) or the anchorite (from ἀναχωρέω, to retire) withdraws from home, family, and friends into the solitude of the desert, to live alone in some desolate cave, clad in shirt of hair or wild-beast skin, with such coarse and scanty fare as the wilderness may provide. The earliest devotees to this mode of life of whom we hear are Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony. It was in the Decian persecution, about A.D. 250, that Paul is said to have taken up his abode in a cave in Upper Egypt, and lived there till his death; but his life, as recorded by Jerome, is so largely legendary that it is impossible to determine the nucleus of fact underlying it. It was St. Anthony who was the real initiator and father of the hermit life as a Christian institution, and who, according to Athanasius, who wrote his history, carried it to a great extreme of asceticism. He, too, was of Egyptian (Coptic) origin. He lived at first in the hollow of a tomb, then in a deserted fort, and after that on a bleak mountain near a spring, where he existed upon dates and the water from the spring. Flesh or wine he never tasted. Only once a day did he partake of food, and that after sunset, fasting often from two to five days together. He slept on the bare ground, and, as if dirt were essential to perfection, never washed his feet. His entire wardrobe consisted of a hair shirt, a sheepskin and a girdle. A large part of his life was taken up with conflicts with the devil, who in dreams and visions appeared to him in many forms; sometimes as a hideous dragon, and sometimes in the form of a beautiful woman. The visions were no doubt largely the creation of a disordered stomach acting on an unnourished and deranged brain.

The Stylites or pillar saints.

His example was admired and followed by multitudes, and before long the Egyptian deserts were swarming

with hermits. A little later it took a new and more sensational form in the Stylites or pillar saints, the father of whom was Symeon, who for thirty-six years stood day and night, summer and winter, on a lofty unsheltered pillar nearly forty cubits high, some forty miles east of Antioch. Multitudes flocked to witness the singular spectacle, and regarded him with unbounded admiration and reverence.

When the hermits had increased in number they at length gathered around a leader or superior, forming *λαῦραι*, or villages of scattered huts, whose occupants lived more or less in intercourse with one another. These *lauras* became common in the deserts of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Syria, and prepared for the next stage in the development.

3. The third stage in the evolution of the monastic life was *cœnobitic monasticism* (from *κοινὸς βίος*), or the life of the cloister. Its founder was Pachomius, already mentioned, a contemporary of Anthony. He belonged to the Upper Thebaid, and, as before stated, appears to have been originally a monk-priest of Serapis. It was in 325 that he formed and established a society of monks on the island of Tabennæ on the Nile, in Upper Egypt, which before his death had increased to eight or nine cloisters or monasteries in the Thebaid, with some thousands of members. Their manner of life was regulated by certain rules. A three years' probation was necessary before admission. Manual labour in the form of agriculture, boat-making, basket-making, mat-making and the like, was added to spiritual exercises. They lived three in a cell, took their meals together, but in doing so observed strict silence, and made their wants known only by signs. A cloister for nuns, under the supervision of his sister, was also founded by Pachomius. The life of the cloister thus instituted by Pachomius is an organisation of the ascetic life on a *social basis*, and to some qualified extent recognises the social element in human nature. "The corporate monasticism of the Nicene age," says Dr. Gwatkin, "is in the main of Coptic origin—most of the early monks bear Coptic names. It is worth asking whether some of the earliest Christian monasteries may not have been heathen monasteries converted wholesale to Christianity, but continuing their old rule of life with little or no change."<sup>1</sup>

In the third stage we have cœnobitic monasticism, or the life of the cloister.

4. The union of a number of cloisters or communities under a common government was a natural and inevitable

In the fourth stage we have a union of cloisters.

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin's "Early Church History," Vol. I., p. 245, note.

development of the foregoing and may be described as the *fourth stage* in the evolution.

### III. *The Extension of Monasticism*

The spread  
of monas-  
ticism :  
chief agents  
in extending  
it : Hilarion,  
Ephraim  
Syrus,  
Basil the  
Great.

Through Hilarion, the anchorite, a disciple of Anthony, the system spread to Palestine and Syria ; by Ephraim Syrus it was still farther advanced in Syria and Mesopotamia ; and in Pontus and Cappadocia it was greatly popularised and extended by Basil the Great, who gave it a new rule, and sought to combine not only physical labour, but study and the education of the young, with the ascetic life.

Athanasius.

Athanasius by his life of Anthony, and by three different visits to Rome, brought the knowledge and practice of monasticism to the West. Cloisters were founded in the neighbourhood of Rome, and from Rome monasticism spread over Italy and to the islands of the Mediterranean. The islands on the west coast of Italy, and on the south-east of Gaul, such as particularly Lerinum or Lerina, became famous as monastic centres. In Southern Gaul, John Cassian, after having for many years associated with the monks of Egypt, founded a monastery and a convent for nuns near Marseilles and wrote two treatises which gave a great and lasting impetus to Western monasticism. One of the most interesting parts of his work on monastic institutions (*De cœnobiorum institutis et de octo principalem vitiorum remediis libri duodecim*) is that in which he treats of the besetting sins and failings of the monks, which are, he says, gluttony, sins of the flesh, avarice, anger, gloominess, torpor, vanity and pride. He discusses with much acuteness and good sense both their cause and their cure. At Milan a monastery was established by Ambrose, whose powerful influence did much to make the system popular with all classes. Augustine at Hippo in North Africa set up what he called a *monasterium clericorum* in his own residence for the benefit of his clergy, but does not appear to have extended the institution beyond the slaves and the poor.

Ambrose.

Augustine.

Martin of  
Tours.

A leading part in the propagation of the monastic life in Gaul was taken by Martin (of Tours). Martin had been born in Pannonia (now Hungary) of pagan parents, but educated in Italy, and had served as a soldier in the Roman army. After his conversion he lived first as a hermit in Italy, but later founded at Poitiers the first monastery in Gaul. It was in 370 he was elected bishop of Tours, in the discharge of which office, however, he continued to main-

tain a strict monastic life ; and before his death in 397 he had gathered around him thousands of monks and nuns, and had made the system intensely popular.

But the man who did more than any other to promote and Jerome. extend monasticism among the learned and wealthy classes was Jerome, who has been called the greatest scholar in Latin Christendom. He was born at Stridon, near Aquileia, the son of wealthy parents, was educated at Rome under the tuition of the famous grammarian Donatus, and became an accomplished student in classical literature. Not being afflicted with an excess of modesty, he describes himself as a " philosopher, a grammarian, a dialectician, a Hebraist, a Graecist, a Latinist, a trilinguist in short." In a dream he imagined he was called before the judgment seat of Christ, and, when asked what he was, said he was a Christian. " Mentiris," said the Lord to him, " Ciceronianus es, non Christianus, ubi enim thesaurus tuus ibi et cor tuum." He thought he was severely rebuked and even scourged, and made a solemn vow never again to take such works into his hands. But his version of the Bible, his commentaries and other writings prove against the rash oath the value of his linguistic and historical learning. Having resolved to devote himself to a life of severe abstinence, he repaired to Antioch, visited some of the more celebrated hermits in that neighbourhood, and spent some time as an ascetic in the Syrian desert. He describes the intense struggles he had to maintain there with a sensual nature, showing that the monastic life was no proof against the temptations of the flesh and the devil. To enable him to mortify the flesh he had recourse to two methods—the one fasting for a whole week, and the other the study of Hebrew, which he learned from a converted Jew. Which was the more efficacious we are not informed. Neither the one nor the other, nor both together, succeeded in subduing his irritable temper or in mollifying his bitter tongue. He himself tells of another monk with whom he disputed so hotly that they spat in one another's faces, and retired from the combat still spitting! He was ordained a presbyter by Paulinus of Antioch, but preferred the life of a monk and a student to the stated charge of a flock. After a visit to Constantinople he returned to Rome, where he laboured with great zeal in the promotion of the monastic life among the learned, patrician, and wealthier classes. And great was his success, especially among the ladies of the great patrician families, the most notable of whom were Paula and her household.

After the death of his great patron Damasus, the Roman bishop, in 384, he left Rome, and with Paula and her daughter Eustochium, and some monks, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After visiting the holy places in Palestine, and a sojourn in Egypt, he finally, with his two female friends, in 386 took up his abode in Bethlehem, where he established a monastery, prosecuted his Biblical and other studies, completed his Latin version of the Bible, and engaged in many violent and bitter controversies with men like Jovinian and Pelagius, Rufinus and Augustine. No single individual did so much to make monasticism popular in the higher ranks of society.

#### IV. *The Dominating Influence of Monasticism on Mediæval Thought and Life*

Mediæval thought dominated by monasticism.

Eastern monasticism in comparison dreamy and unproductive.

Western monasticism disciplined, active and industrial.

The marked difference between Eastern and Western monasticism should be noted. In the East, in spite of many efforts to the contrary, the monks got little beyond the meditative, contemplative side of the monastic ideal. The ascetic life in the East was little better than a dreamy, barren quietism. Their typical and model saint was Symeon on his pillar. Hence, with a few individual exceptions, "Eastern monasticism bore little fruit save fanatics and madmen, and the infinite ingenuities of self-torture." In the West, on the contrary, instead of the unproductive life of the frenzied recluse we have the ordered, disciplined, social, and industrial life of the convent. The solitary hermit is transformed into the brother of the common life, whose chief characteristic is not his unnatural isolation, but his social temper; not his idleness, but his fruitful and beneficent activity; not his unrestrained and frenzied individualism, but the order and discipline to which he was subject.

The chief agent in effecting this was Benedict of Nursia.

And the person who did more than any other to save Western monasticism from the sterility, dreaminess, and extravagance of the East was Benedict of Nursia, the founder of the great Benedictine order. It was he who gave it the famous moral discipline and rule, which so profoundly changed and transfigured the monastic ideal. On the ruins of a temple of Apollo in the Neapolitan province, in a wild mountain region, he founded about the year 529 the celebrated monastery of Monte Casino—"the most powerful and renowned monastery in the Catholic universe; celebrated chiefly because there Benedict wrote

his rule, and formed the type which was to serve as a model to innumerable communities which submitted to that sovereign code" (Montalembert).

The main features of the rule which he gave to monastic life were these: At the head of each monastery he placed an abbot, who would be elected by the monks themselves and who would be to the monks under him what the bishop was to his diocese. Entrance on the monastic life must be prefaced by a year's probation or novitiate; and if at the close of that period the novice took the vow, it was then irrevocable, and bound him to the life-long, threefold pledge of chastity, renunciation of all property, and absolute obedience. Seven hours each day were to be given to prayer, praise, and meditation; from two to three hours to reading; and six or seven hours to manual labour within doors, or in the fields, or to the education of the young.

The "rule" of Benedict.

The chief aim of Benedict was to mitigate the harshness, the isolation and monotony that characterised the system in the East, and to combine gentleness with strictness, industry with devotion. His rule made an epoch in the history of monasticism. The Benedictine order spread with extraordinary rapidity over Europe, and became a model for all others. "The labour of the Benedictine monk," says Sohm, "was destined to change the solitudes which surrounded the cloisters into seats of learning and culture. It was to prepare a place in the cloister for art and training. It was to turn the cloisters into centres of education, from which there should go forth into the world influences all-powerful in the practical, intellectual and spiritual life. As a society of workers the Benedictines were to turn their faces towards the world. These ascetics were irresistibly compelled by community of labour to proceed from the renunciation of the world to the education of the world, to the reformation of the household, the State, and the Church."<sup>1</sup>

Through the whole mediæval period the influence of the monastic system on life and society was profound. Its tremendous, all-dominating influence appears in this, that the monks alone came to be regarded as "the religious," and all who were not monks, even the ordinary parochial clergy, were nothing more than *secular*, i.e., "of the world." It was thus conceived as the highest and most perfect ideal of life. At its best the monastery stood in the estimation

Dominates mediæval life.

<sup>1</sup> "Outline of Church History," p. 70.

of the whole mediæval period as a protest against the worldliness, the corruption, the luxury, the immorality and vice of the cities, and promised a quiet refuge and an opportunity for uninterrupted communion with God to those who were weary of the world and sin.

Its greatest  
product  
was scholas-  
ticism.

And perhaps its greatest, most notable and influential product was scholasticism and the great schoolmen, the scholars and thinkers of the middle ages. The monastery of Bec, in Normandy, is generally regarded as "the cradle" of scholasticism; and its great abbot Anselm, who took a leading part in first applying its dialectical principles in the eucharistic, predestinarian, and other controversies, is known as "the father of the schoolmen." Both Lanfranc (his predecessor in the abbey of Bec) and Anselm became afterwards Archbishops of Canterbury. All the great schoolmen—men like Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugo, Richard and Walter of St. Victor, Alexander of Hales, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and Roger Bacon—were monks. The palmary period of scholasticism was the thirteenth century, when it acquired complete ascendancy over Western thought—an ascendancy closely associated with the labours of two recently constituted monastic orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, who were bitter rivals, intensely jealous of each other, and who took opposite sides in all controversies, though as a rule both were Realists. Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas were Dominicans; Alexander of Hales, Bonaventura and Roger Bacon were Franciscans, though the last-named turned away from dialectical and metaphysical subtleties to mathematics and the natural sciences. Few of the men just named have ever been surpassed in intellectual gifts and dialectical power. They are far from being despised by the best of our modern thinkers. Coleridge was convinced that more profit was to be derived from the study of the schoolmen than from the study of the Fathers; and men like Hegel and Sir William Hamilton thought highly of them.

Monasti-  
cism did its  
best work  
after its  
primary  
principles  
were  
reversed.

It will be manifest from what has been said already that the great institution of monasticism, while very one-sided, and in some ways hurtful in its action upon human nature, and while it had some elements embodied in it which were certain to lead (as they did lead) to various abuses and corruptions, had at the same time, or came in the course of time to have, other elements which were wholesome and praiseworthy, and which, when modified to social, industrial and educational ends, not only changed, but, as we

shall see, actually reversed, the primary principles with which the system started at the beginning, and eventually did good service both to Church and State. This will be still more apparent when we proceed, as we now do, to give some brief account of the work accomplished by the monks, the mark which they made in history, and the degree in which they have anticipated, and their work has been continued by, the Reformers and the Protestant denominations.

### V. Memorable Monkish Achievements

1. It is not too much to say that the *Evangelisation of Europe*, after the chaos caused by the barbarian invasions, and some restoration of civil order, was due mainly, not to the secular clergy, but to the monks. Wherever we turn in the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries we find the monks engaged in this work of evangelising the still heathen races and reviving the religious life of those who had fallen away. And to the Irish monasteries belongs the honour of having been the leaders and pioneers in the great missionary enterprise. Earliest of all, St. Brendan carried the light of Christian truth to the Western islands of Alba (now Scotland). He is followed by Columba, who migrates from Derry to Iona, becomes the apostle of the Northern Picts, and, after the death of King Brude, of the Southern Picts as well in what we now call the Lowlands of Scotland. Not less noteworthy were the missionary zeal and success of Columbanus, who, trained first under Sinell at Cluan-Inis (Clunish), and later under Comgall in the great monastery of Bangor, Co. Down, set out with his little company of missionary pilgrims for the continent, settled first in the ruins of an old Roman fort amid the wild and desolate ranges of the Vosges mountains, between Burgundy and Austrasia (the scene in our own time of such fierce conflicts between the French and German armies), where he and his companions laboured for some twenty years, made many converts, and had a powerful and salutary influence on all classes. But driven from here by the petty persecutions of Brunehild, whose evil doings Columbanus had denounced, the missionary band went up the Rhine to Switzerland, where they founded another monastery, where many believed and were baptised, where one of their number, Callech or St. Gall, settled permanently, reclaimed the people from barbarism, instructing them both in the arts of agriculture and in the duties of religion, and giving

The evangelisation of Europe due mainly to the monk.

The Irish monks the leaders in mission enterprise. St. Brendan. Columba.

Columbanus.

St. Gall.



his name to the town and canton of St. Gall. Thence Columbanus crossed the Alps into Northern Italy, founded the famous monastery of Bobbio in a lonely defile of the Apennines between Genoa and Milan, and laboured to diffuse the light of Christianity among the Lombards. It was Gregory who, when a monk, conceived the idea of the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England, and who when, after his appointment to the Papal chair, he found it impossible to go himself, sent Augustine with a band of forty monks to Christianise the Anglo-Saxons ; and when, later still, the whole North of England relapsed into heathenism, it was Irish monks from Iona, led by Aidan, who re-evangelised and recovered it to the faith of Christ. (Even David, the apostle of Wales, was the son of an Irish mother.) "For a time in fact it seemed," says Green in his *Short History*, "as if the course of the world's history was to be changed, as if the older Celtic race that Roman and German had swept before them had turned to the moral conquest of their conquerors, as if Celtic and not Latin Christianity was to mould the destinies of the churches of the West." We cannot wait to recount the labours of St. Fursa among the East Angles and afterwards in Gaul ; or of Fergil (Virgilius) in Bavaria and Carinthia, who, when he taught that the earth was round, was denounced by the "infallible" Pope Zachary as teaching "a wicked and perverse doctrine," and was threatened with degradation from the priesthood and expulsion from the Church ; or of Willibrord, who owed his education and inspiration to an Irish monastery, in evangelising Batavia, Friesland and Westphalia ; or of St. Kilian in Franconia ; or do more than record the fact that when the first Norwegian missionaries had penetrated to Iceland they found that the Irish missionary monks had been there before them, and had left distinct traces of their mission.

Anglo-Saxon  
England  
Christianised  
by monks  
from Rome.

When the  
North of  
England  
relapsed  
into  
heathenism  
it was Irish  
monks who  
reclaimed  
them.

St. Fursa.  
Virgilius.

Willibrord.

St. Kilian.

St. Boniface.

St. Ausgar  
and  
St. Fridolin.

It was an English monk called Winfrith, better known afterwards as St. Boniface, brought up in the Benedictine Abbey of Netley, near Winchester, who became the great and celebrated apostle of Germany, for five-and-thirty years preaching, baptising, founding churches, schools, and monasteries, ordaining clergy, and organising the Church in Germany. It was from monasteries also that St. Ausgar, the apostle of Scandinavia, and St. Fridolin, the apostle of the Allemanni, derived their inspiration. Nor should it be forgotten in this connection that not only many of the most renowned missionaries, but some of the

greatest and most distinguished names for faith and love and zeal and saintly devotion—such names as those of Martin of Tours, the Venerable Beda, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and St. Francis of Assisi—are found among the monks.

2. The *education and intellectual training and development of Europe* in the period under consideration was in a great measure due to the monasteries. During this period education was almost exclusively in the hands of the monks. As a result of the barbarian invasions the old imperial and municipal schools had everywhere disappeared, but the monastic schools took their place. And here again the initiative was taken by the Irish monastic schools, in which the knowledge of Greek and Hebrew survived when it had perished elsewhere, and to which scholars repaired in large numbers from all parts of Europe. It was from an Irish monastery that John Scotus Erigena went forth to revive the ancient office of teacher. It was an English monastery that gave such a scholar as Beda to England, and such a teacher as Alcuin to the Continent. We have seen already that the great schoolmen, the ablest and most profound thinkers of their time, who for intellectual strength and calibre will bear comparison with the thinkers of any time, came from the monasteries.

3. It is hardly less true to say that the monasteries were *the great civilising centres* of that barbarous age. Not only in their inculcation of the duties of religion, and by their educational achievement, but in the promotion of great industries, such as hewing down forests, clearing jungles, draining pestilent marshes, ploughing, sowing and reaping, laying the foundations of numerous towns and cities, as they did, and in the cultivation of the various industrial and other arts, the monks did much in a rough, wild and savage time, and among half-civilised peoples, to promote civilisation in the West. In most instances the monasteries were industrial colonies—and this was eminently true of the Irish monasteries and of the many continental institutions formed after the Irish type—as well as religious and educational institutions. Many a waste tract of land was reclaimed by them and covered with golden grain. The prophetic words were fully and literally verified: "The wilderness and the solitary place were glad for them; and the desert was made to rejoice and blossom as the rose." The monasteries were schools of art as well, where both the mechanical and fine arts were practised, in which were

Education largely in the hands of the monks.

The monasteries were great civilising centres.

trained the mechanics and artificers, the famous architects and builders of the middle ages. In those rude times, when the temptations to an idle, violent, predatory life were numerous and powerful, it was an immense advantage to the people to have set before them the example of self-denial and self-discipline, of temperance and self-control, of diligence and charity which they beheld in the monastic community. It was inevitable that such an example should command the respect of both chiefs and their followers, and that they should do not a little to mitigate the evils and abate the injustices and cruelties of the time, and exert on the whole an important civilising influence.

They made  
life more  
cosmo-  
politan.

4. The monasteries, too, served to make life *more international and cosmopolitan*. Scholars, mechanics, artificers, merchants, and travellers of all kinds were continually passing from one country to another. There was much more travel, and more communication between places remote from one another, than we should now conceive to be possible; and to all such wayfarers the convent offered a warm and generous hospitality. The door of the monastery was always open, and its table free to every comer. They were the inns of the mediæval period, none the less acceptable, we may suppose, because the entertainment was gratuitous to those unable to pay for it. And information and intelligence were circulated through their agency, and the intellectual horizon of the time greatly widened.

The memor-  
able struggle  
between the  
bishops and  
the monks.

5. The next landmark in monastic history which invites our notice is more ecclesiastical in its character. It is certain that one of the most noteworthy features in that history is *the conflict that went on so long between the bishops and the monks*, and in which the monks were ultimately victorious.

The keynote of that memorable struggle is found, as has been pointed out, in the teaching of Jerome, the most typical representative of early monasticism, when he says that "among the ancients presbyters and bishops were the same, and that bishops ought to know that they are above presbyters by the custom of the Church rather than by the actual ordinance of the Lord." When an attempt was made to depreciate the authority of presbyters he wrote a famous letter affirming still more positively the same position. The fact thus noted and emphasised by Jerome continued to be regarded as fundamental and vital by the monks, and to supply them with a ruling motive all through their history. Monasticism seldom lost the attitude of

antagonism to the bishops, and had occasion often to remind them that originally presbyters and bishops were one and the same. Its history is the history of an almost continuous and strenuous struggle on the part of the bishops to bring the monks and the monasteries under their jurisdiction, and a like struggle on the part of the monasteries to remain independent of episcopal control. In that conflict the monasteries came into close and friendly alliance with the Papacy, which gave them its effective help, and enabled them to maintain their independence. In the East the monasteries *were* soon brought under episcopal government and supervision; but in the West, through the assistance of the Popes, they successfully resisted every attempt to subject them. The abbots, though only presbyters, were expressly assigned by the Pope a position of equality with the bishops, received from him the right to wear the episcopal mitre, and often out-rivalled the bishops in authority, dignity, and influence. And not only were the monks exempted from episcopal jurisdiction, they were allowed and encouraged by the Popes to usurp in a great measure the functions of the secular clergy, to assume charge of parishes, to hear confession and give absolution in the parish churches, everywhere that their services might be desired. And everywhere, as a rule, the friars were more acceptable to the people than the parish clergy.

Besides, monasticism was from the beginning a strong assertion of the rights of the individual layman. Before monasticism arose the individual was practically ignored. The solidarity of the Catholic Church under the iron heel of the hierarchy had become more and more compact and complete, and individual right and freedom were well-nigh extinguished. But when men in multitudes withdrew from society and fled to the solitude of the desert, left bishops and clergy and their ministrations behind them, and claimed to enjoy direct and immediate communion with the Eternal, it was a most emphatic assertion of the rights of the individual, though a layman, and of his privilege of free personal access to the Most High without clerical or priestly interposition. For the monks never ceased to maintain the great principle of the priesthood of all believers, and to lay much stress on it. From the very beginning of their career, paradoxical as it may seem, they thus affirmed and vindicated the first and fundamental principles of Protestantism. When later the work of

Monasticism asserted the rights of the individual layman,

and the priesthood of all believers.

In monasticism, in short, we see the faint beginnings of a new age, the harbinger of the Reformation.

In the age prior to the Reformation the monasteries were the homes of a free and more devout religious life.

They prepared the way for the Reformation.

evangelising and converting the new European races devolved upon them, they did seek and obtain admission to the priesthood ; but it was not so as a general rule at first. And the vow of obedience to the head of the monastery was regarded as making superfluous the vow of obedience to the bishop. Thus the historian who looks below the surface may discern in monasticism, however disguised, the first faint beginnings of a new age, the harbinger of a great reaction towards New Testament Christianity which set in in full force only with the Reformation. They kept alive the idea of a universal priesthood of Christians, and vindicated the rights of the presbyter, till the Reformation raised these principles into still greater prominence.

It was not accidental, therefore, that in the age before the Reformation, before decay and corruption set in, the monasteries were in numerous instances the homes of a freer and more devout religious life and thought than were to be found elsewhere. It was in the monasteries that the mystics arose, and found their congenial abode—the mystics who have ever testified to the great verity that the Kingdom of God is within men, and not confined to any external system. It is interesting and suggestive here to find St. Bernard claiming for the monasteries a higher ideal of spiritual worship than that of the secular world-Church over which the bishops presided. He speaks of men in the latter “ flocking in crowds to kiss the decorated images of saints: they are enchained by their admiration of the beautiful more than by reverence for the saints. The bishops were obliged to let themselves down to the different degrees of culture among the men whom they had to deal with; to them, therefore, he conceded the right of employing such sensuous means to excite the devotion of the sensuous multitude. But it was otherwise with the monks, who, dead to the sensible world, ought no longer to need such outward means of excitement, but should strive rather to reach the ideal of the purely spiritual worship of God.”<sup>1</sup>

In view of this record of monasticism it is not surprising that it was the monasteries that beyond all else prepared the way for the Reformation and contributed to it. “ The most powerful heralds of the Reformation,” says Kurtz, “ were the monkish orders. . . Evangelists inspired by a purer doctrine arose in all parts of Germany, first and most of all among the Augustinian order, which;

<sup>1</sup> See Bernard, Epp. iv. 17; vi. 3, quoted by Allen, “ Christian Institutions,” p. 215.

almost to a man, went over to the Reformation, and had the glory of providing its first martyr. This order regarded Luther's honour as its own. Next to them came the Franciscans, of whom many had the courage to free themselves of their shackles. From their cloisters proceeded the two famous popular preachers, Eberlin of Günsburg and Henry of Kettenbach in Ulm, the Hamburg reformer Stephen Kempen, the fervent Lambert, the reformer of Hesse, Luther's friend Myconius of Gotha, and many more. Other orders, too, supplied their contingent, even the Dominicans, to whom Martin Bucer, the Strassburg reformer, belonged. Blaurer of Württemberg was a Benedictine, Rhegius a Carmelite, Bugenhagen a Premonstratensian."<sup>1</sup> "I anticipate," said Wyclif, "that some of the friars, whom God shall be pleased to enlighten, will return with all devotion to the original religion of Christ, will lay aside their unfaithfulness, and will freely return to primitive truth, and build up the Church as Paul did before them." This prediction was singularly and literally fulfilled in Luther, the Augustinian monk who shook the world, and in the numerous friars who followed his example.

And very remarkable it is that "wherever the monks had travelled, especially those from the Irish and Irish-Scottish monasteries, with their peculiar apprehension of the religion of Christ, *there* an influence had been exerted which was never entirely lost. In this way subtle forms of spiritual influence may have entered into the life of the people to reappear again when all memory of their origin had long been lost. Scotland had from the first a monastic form of Christianity, and when the Reformation came it accepted the monastic ideal of the Church—the rule of presbyters. The influence of the monks in Switzerland and Germany had laid the foundation of the Church, and had been perpetuated in powerful monastic foundations. So it was also in the Netherlands, converted by monastic preachers, where bishops had always been few in number."<sup>2</sup>

There is one reflection which cannot but have occurred to the thoughtful reader of the rapid survey just concluded. One of the most singular and significant features in the history of monasticism is the way in which in the course of its evolution the original aims, motives and principles which inspired it were not only modified, but in very many in-

The original aims, motives and principles of monasticism reversed in the course of its evolution.

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz's "Church History," Vol. II., § 125.

<sup>2</sup> Allen's "Christian Institutions," Chap. XII., p. 261.

stances completely transformed and reversed. Nay, as has been truly said, "every direct, specific purpose of the monk seemed in the long run to have been reversed or to have proved a failure."<sup>1</sup>

The one desire of the monk was to be alone. "If," says Jerome, "you desire to be indeed what you are in name, *a monk*, that is, *one who lives alone*, what have you to do with cities, which are the homes not of solitaries, but of crowds?"<sup>2</sup> The monk, accordingly, left towns and cities behind him and made his solitary home in some deserted ruin or lonely mountain cave. But the world followed him even to the wilderness; he was soon surrounded by many brethren in well-tenanted cloisters; and in numerous cases towns and cities grew up around him. Bent originally on the salvation of his own individual soul and on that only, he became in course of time the greatest and most successful of missionary evangelists, and left a splendid record of work done in the effort to save others. He set out on a crusade against the laws of his own nature, regarded his bodily constitution as an evil thing, the worst enemy of his spiritual nature, to be mortified and crucified, emaciated and mutilated by every conceivable self-torture; but he came later to recognise the human form as a fit and noble manifestation and expression of the soul within, in course of time developed into an artist, and did not a little for the furtherance of various forms of art. He began with a contempt of reason, despised philosophy as an enemy of true religion, turned away from the pursuit of learning and classical literature, with utter aversion; but before he ended the monasteries became the greatest scholastic institutions of their time—the homes of the great scholars, the great theologians, the great thinkers, and the great philosophers of the age. The monk took a vow of poverty, renounced all property, and bade good-bye to wealth, but as the years and the centuries passed the monasteries accumulated enormous property in land and houses, and grew into such wealthy corporations that they awakened the envy, and drew towards them the covetous eyes, of kings and rulers. The monks set at naught the family, despised the marriage tie and the married state as beneath the truly religious man, and sought to create a Church

<sup>1</sup> Allen's "Christian Institutions," Book I., Chap. IX., p. 173. The remarks that follow are largely suggested by the chapter referred to.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome's "Ep. ad Paulinum," lviii. 5.

holier than the "Catholic" and "secular" one, one that would be the true bride of Christ; they "took the vow of celibacy and called it chastity, and the result was such disastrous moral failures and collapse as to cast a discredit on the system from which it has not yet recovered." In its origin monasticism was indifferent and even hostile to the interests of the State, dead to patriotic feeling, fleeing to the wilderness to escape the duties and responsibilities of loyal citizens, and hastening thereby the downfall of the Empire; and yet the time came when they aimed at supreme world-power, and, as in the case of men like Gregory the Great and Hildebrand, monks aspired to rule both the world and the Church, and to give laws even to Kings and Emperors. The monks, in short, eschewed the amenities and refinements of civil and social life, and plunged into the sordid, barbarous, and worse than savage life of the desert anchorite, living on the scantiest fare, half-starved, not half-clad, the hair shirt and sheepskin over it only half-concealing the dirt in which they wallowed as if it were a means of grace; and yet by and by, under an entirely changed *régime*, the monks become the pioneers of a new civilisation, and do a noble work in the elevation, polishing and refinement of rude and semi-civilised peoples, and in inculcating the industrial arts and the finer arts as well.

We know of no institution which in the course of a long history has undergone such a singular evolution, which has so completely reversed its original aims and purposes; and very significant it is that the finest results achieved by the monasteries were due to that abandonment and reversal of their primitive ideal.



## CHAPTER III

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRELATE

THE earlier stages in this evolution, and the influences which combined in furthering it, have been already traced to some extent in the chapter on "The Evolution of the Priest," which I must assume the reader to have perused, and to carry in his memory. In our present study I have to follow the development from the point reached by it under Cyprian to its still further consummation in the emergence of the prelate or hierarch in the officials known as diocesan and metropolitan bishops. I must first, however, return for a little to what was the earliest stage in that development.

The first step in the evolution of the prelate was the rise of the monarchical bishop, who was the chief pastor of a congregation.

In the Church of the New Testament there was a plurality of bishops in each congregation.

The first step in the process that led to the evolution of the "prelate" was the emergence of what has been rather unhappily called the "monarchical bishop," who was just the presiding pastor of a congregation, or little Christian community. That is what the "bishop" was in the second and third centuries; he was what we should now call the minister or pastor of a congregation, and very little of the monarch there was about him. In the New Testament period assuredly there were "bishops"—a plurality of them—in each church or congregation, designated "presbyters" and "bishops" interchangeably.<sup>1</sup> This elementary fact still holds the field, and will continue to hold it, until a violent and arbitrary change of texts—not one text, but several in different documents—is justifiable to support a theory.

Harnack's theory not accepted by the soundest scholarship.

Harnack's theory that the presbyters were not officials, but older men who exercised a sort of influence in the primitive Church, is at variance with the apostolic and sub-apostolic records, and has not commended itself to the soundest scholarship. One of the sanest and most distinguished of living Church historians in Germany, at once scientific and thorough as well as well-balanced and judicious, is Professor Loofs, of Halle. Not to speak of other

<sup>1</sup> Acts xi. 30; xiv. 23; xx. 17, 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1, 8; Titus i. 5, 7.

continental Church historians, Professor Loofs has carefully examined and rejected Harnack's view, endorsing in substance that of Bishop Lightfoot as to the presbyter-bishops. As Dr. Gwatkin points out, Paul's "argument from the bishop to the elder" <sup>1</sup> would be no argument at all, if the bishops were no more than a small class among the elders." <sup>2</sup>

As an "apostle" and brother of our Lord James held a position of influence, doubtless, in the Church at Jerusalem, but, as Dr. Gwatkin well says, "influence is one thing, office is another, and there is no serious evidence that James held the office of bishop at Jerusalem." <sup>3</sup> The part taken by James at the Council in Jerusalem, and in particular his words in Acts xv. 19, "wherefore my sentence is," etc., have been cited to prove that James presided as bishop, and gave his decision authoritatively. "The pronoun is emphatic," we are told, "and indicates that the speaker is deciding with authority"; but evidently the emphatic position of the pronoun signifies: "The other speakers have given their judgment, I give mine." The present writer suggested this as the true exegesis in his *Church of the Sub-Apostolic Age*, published in 1888. The same exposition precisely is given by Dr. Hort in his *Christian Ecclesia*, published in 1897. The appeal from Antioch was made to "the apostles and elders at Jerusalem" <sup>4</sup>; the decision arrived at is always spoken of, not as the decision of James, but as that of "the apostles and elders" <sup>5</sup>; and there is no trace of any other officials at the conference than "the apostles and elders"; the bishop of Jerusalem is conspicuous by his absence.

As to Timothy and Titus, they were, as Bishop Lightfoot calls them, "apostolic delegates," or, as Moeller calls them, "apostolic assistants," who did a work which the apostle personally was not able to overtake, or, as Professor Gwatkin designates them, "vicars apostolic, sent on temporary missions in the apostle's place." "It is the conception of a later age," says Lightfoot, "which represents Timothy as bishop of Ephesus and Titus as bishop of Crete. St. Paul's own language implies that the position which they held was only temporary." <sup>6</sup> The work done by them, as Dr. Gwatkin shows, "is a work which must be

James not a bishop, but an apostle.

Timothy and Titus not bishops, but apostolic delegates sent on temporary missions.

<sup>1</sup> Titus i. 5-7. <sup>2</sup> "Early Church History," Vol. I., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> "Early Church History," Vol. I., p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xv. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xv. 22-29; xvi. 4.

<sup>6</sup> "Epistle to Philippians," p. 199, sixth edition.

done under any form of government ; and even if it is done by a single man, we still need the permanent tenure, and the local position to make him a bishop. We must not turn the moderator of the Scotch Assembly into a bishop in spite of himself." <sup>1</sup> Accordingly, after a careful review of the evidence, Dr. Gwatkin's conclusion is that " we find no trace of bishops in the New Testament." <sup>2</sup> He means, of course, " bishops " in the later sense.

But while there is no trace of what may be called mono-episcopacy (one-man-episcopacy) in the new Testament, its existence after the middle of the second century appears to be universal in the Church. By that date the superintendence of a single bishop in each Church or congregation has to a certain extent taken the place of the collective superintendence of a number of presbyter-bishops. Only let it be borne in mind that his oversight is simply *pastoral*, and within the sphere of a single congregation or community. Dr. Gwatkin makes a very pregnant and suggestive remark with regard to the New Testament bishops. He says : " The elders of Ephesus are reminded <sup>3</sup> that they are bishops, and the qualifications of the bishops and elders as described to Timothy and Titus are nearly the same, and point to oversight certainly, and to the same sort of oversight, but to oversight which is *pastoral*, not what we should call *episcopal*." By " episcopal oversight," we take it Dr. Gwatkin means oversight not simply of the flock, but of *other clergy*, and for which a better term would be " prelatial." But the same remark which Dr. Gwatkin applies to the bishops and elders in Timothy and Titus applies also with equal truth and force to the " bishops " of the second and third centuries. They were pastors of single congregations or communities, and their " oversight was *pastoral*, not what we should call *episcopal*," or (to use the less equivocal word) *prelatial*. There was a difference deep and wide between the congregational " bishop " or pastor of the second and third centuries and the prelate or hierarch, the diocesan or metropolitan of a later time, who ruled over many clergy and their congregations.

But meantime the question we have to consider is—How was the change from the *plural-episcopacy* of the apostolic age to the *mono-episcopacy* of the second and third centuries brought about ?

The oversight of the monarchical bishop *pastoral*, in the sphere of a single congregation, not *episcopal*.

How was the change from *plural-episcopacy* to *mono-episcopacy* brought about ?

<sup>1</sup> " Early Church History," Vol. I., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xx. 28.

Relying on the statements of certain writers at the end of the second century, such as Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria, Bishop Lightfoot inferred that "monarchical episcopacy" was established by the apostle John at Ephesus prior to his death. These writers, however, make the most absurd mistakes in their attempts to describe the state of things in the primitive Church, some of their crude blunders being pointed out by Lightfoot himself. Irenæus affirms that Jesus lived to be an old man, and that His public ministry lasted for nearly twenty years. He represents the Roman Church as having been "founded" by Peter and Paul, although nothing in history is more certain than that the Roman Church was "founded" long before either of them saw Rome. Both Irenæus and Clement are so obsessed by the Church order of their own time that they can conceive of no other as existing at an earlier time, and so misread the plainest statements of the New Testament on the subject. They both represent Paul as "summoning the bishops *and* presbyters" of Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, not seeing or realising that "presbyters" and "bishops" here<sup>1</sup> are names of the same office-bearers. What value can be attached to the story of Clement of Alexandria, which he himself calls a "legend" (*μῦθος*), of which he implies that there were several versions, to the effect that John committed a certain young man to the care of a "bishop," also called a "presbyter"? If the "legend" has any foundation in fact, the "bishop," who is also called a "presbyter," was doubtless (as Harnack suggests) a member of the council of presbyter-bishops at Ephesus. And there are other weighty considerations against Bishop Lightfoot's inference. He himself argues very effectively against the hypothesis of Rothe that episcopacy was set up by a council of the apostles after the fall of Jerusalem, that in that case it would have been immediately and generally adopted everywhere throughout the Church. But Lightfoot's argument is just as effective against his own hypothesis. In view of the close and constant intercourse that went on among the churches even comparatively remote from one another, it is inconceivable that, had episcopacy been established by John, it should have been so slow in coming into operation in large and central churches such as Corinth, Philippi, and Rome, within easy reach of the scene of John's labours. For what are the facts? From the epistle of Clement of

Not by the institution of the apostle John.

Clement's story inadequate to prove it.

Lightfoot's own argument in another connection refutes it.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 17, 28.

Rome we learn that at the end of the first century the "monarchical bishop" was unknown in Corinth, and in Rome also. From the *Pastor* of Hermas we gather that he was still non-existent at Rome some thirty or forty years after the opening of the second century; the epistle of Polycarp makes it equally certain that mono-episcopacy was unknown at Philippi a good while after the beginning of that century; while the *Didaché* makes it clear that in the region where that ancient manual was in use it was equally unknown at the date of its appearance—probably not far from the opening years of the second century. "If," says Dr. Gwatkin, "apostles did command that every church should have its bishop, then either we shall find a bishop in every church or else (if fair occasion arise) we shall get some hint that the disobedient churches are doing wrong." Now there is nothing more certain than that twenty-five and even forty years after John is supposed to have established monarchical episcopacy, there are still many and great and central churches, within easy reach of Ephesus, in which there is no trace of it—sufficient evidence that no such command was issued by an apostle. Dr. Gwatkin, therefore, justly concludes that "the theory of an apostolic command is unhistorical." The urgency of Ignatius in favour of monarchical episcopacy is well-known. But "with all his urgency," as Dr. Gwatkin points out, "he never says, 'Obey the bishop as the Lord ordained, or as the apostles gave command'—the continued silence of so earnest an advocate as Ignatius is a plain confession that he knew of no such command; and the ignorance of one who must have known the truth of the matter would seem decisive that no such command was given."<sup>1</sup>

It is equally certain that when in the first half of the second century the change did take place, the bishop was not developed downwards from the apostles, but evolved upwards from the presbyters. This is the view of Lightfoot, Gwatkin, and the great majority of scholars and historians. One of the presbyters, on account of special fitness for governing, teaching, presiding at the worship, refuting heretics, and meeting emergencies, would in the natural course of things be put in the position of president of the college of presbyters again and again, till at length he became permanent president, and in fine to distinguish him from the other presbyters the name of "bishop" was given to him exclusively. Such a change would take

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin's "Early Church History," Vol. I., p. 294.

Dr. Gwatkin's argument fatal to it. If John commanded that every church should have its bishop, then we shall find a bishop in every church or be informed that the disobedient churches are doing wrong.

Ignatius silent as to any such command.

The bishop evolved upwards from the presbyters.

place naturally and almost inevitably in cases where a strong man of special gifts and aptitudes was needed to meet special circumstances and emergencies. Jerome expressly states that "before factions were introduced into religion," the churches were governed by a council of elders, "but as soon as each man began to consider those whom he had baptised to belong to himself and not to Christ, it was decided throughout the world that one elected from among the elders should be placed over the rest, so that the care of the church should devolve on him, and the seeds of schism be removed."<sup>1</sup> In another place he speaks to a similar effect: "When afterwards one presbyter was elected that he might be placed over the rest, this was done as a remedy against schism, that each man might not drag to himself and thus break up the Church of Christ."<sup>2</sup> It was in all probability the dissemination of the false teaching of the Ebionite and Gnostic leaders that led to the change. It would be found expedient also to have one of the presbyters, endowed with special gifts suiting him for the position, presiding at the Lord's day worship, and administering the Lord's Supper. When Justin Martyr calls the person in charge of the Lord's day service "the president of the brethren" we have marked in all likelihood the point of time when one of the presbyters had become permanent president, but had not yet appropriated to himself the exclusive title of "bishop."

Note carefully, however, the fact already indicated that in the second half of the second century, and in the third century, every Christian community or congregation had its "bishop," that the "bishop" at this time is simply the presiding minister or pastor of the congregation, and that his oversight (to use Dr. Gwatkin's phrase) was *pastoral*, not *prelatical*. And this is still the ideal of Church order even in the *Apostolical Constitutions*.<sup>3</sup> "In each Church," says Cheetham, referring to this time, "there is one bishop, and with each bishop is joined the presbytery and the deacons. Every city in which a church was formed had its bishop, whose position in many respects resembled that of the rector of a parish, surrounded by his assistant clergy, rather than that of the modern bishop of a diocese, containing perhaps several large towns."<sup>4</sup> The office of the second and third century "bishop"

In the 2nd and 3rd century, then, every congregation had its bishop or pastor, whose oversight was *pastoral*, not *prelatical*.

<sup>1</sup> Jerome on Titus, i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Ep. ad Evang. clxvi."

<sup>3</sup> See "Apostolical Constitutions," II., 57, 58, 59.

<sup>4</sup> Cheetham's "History of the Church, Early Period," p. 128.

corresponds exactly with that of the Presbyterian minister or pastor of to-day, with his elders and deacons around him. He alone preaches, administers the sacraments, and presides at all meetings of the congregation and the office-bearers. "The first broad fact we notice is," says Dr. Gwatkin, "that though we found no trace of episcopacy in the New Testament, it is universal a century later. By this time every church has its bishop."<sup>1</sup>

The congregation which a bishop appointed often very small.

And how small the congregation might be in which a "bishop" was to be appointed we learn from the *Sources of the Apostolic Canons*, edited by Dr. Harnack. "If there are few men and not twelve persons who are competent to vote at the election of a bishop, the neighbouring churches should be written to, where any of them is a settled one, in order that three selected men may come thence, and examine carefully if he is worthy," etc.; whereon Harnack remarks that the author "has in view small congregations in which there may not be even twelve persons qualified to vote." Even where there were less than twelve Christians of age of the male sex present, a bishop must be chosen."<sup>2</sup> We are reminded here of the fact brought out by Lightfoot in his "Dissertation on the Christian Ministry" in his *Epistle to the Philippians*: "At Alexandria the bishop was nominated and apparently ordained by the twelve presbyters out of their own number."<sup>3</sup> At p. 231 Lightfoot quotes Jerome, Hilary, and Eutychius in support of this statement.

Still more remarkable—the presbyters not only ordained the bishop, but continued to supervise him.

But still more remarkable and significant is another fact disclosed in these *Sources of the Apostolic Canons*, and commented on by Harnack. It is to the effect that the presbyters not only ordained the bishop, but continued to exercise a certain supervision over him. As these "Canons" show, the "bishop" is the pastor, the liturgist, the administrator, and the representative of the congregation to the outer world, but is still to a certain extent under the oversight and superintendence of the presbyters. Of certain presbyters we are told that "they oversee (or supervise) the bishops" (προνοήσονται τῶν ἐπισκόπων).<sup>4</sup> Harnack's comment on this is as follows: "First, it is to be observed that of the relation of the presbyters to the bishop the same word is used (προνοεῖσθαι), which shows

<sup>1</sup> "Early Church History," Vol. I., p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> "Sources of the Apostolic Canons," edited by Prof. Adolf Harnack, and translated by L. A. Wheatly, pp. 7, 35.

<sup>3</sup> P. 226, sixth edition.

<sup>4</sup> P. 12.

their relation to the congregation. This is the technical term for the function of the care and of the 'rule,' and that among the presbyters. Thus also the bishop stands under the care of the presbytery. We discover that even in the time in which from a plurality of bishops there has come to be only one, a kind of supervision of the presbyters over the bishop's action has continued. The episcopal monarchy has not yet had, even at the beginning, the significance of an autocracy; rather has the supreme control of the presbyters continued at times. There were 'the presbyters who presided over the Church' in the full sense of the word when there were no ἐπίσκοποι, but only one bishop (a single pastoral office)." . . . "The bishop is at the θυσιαστήριον not only the liturgist, but also the manager of the congregation; but his government is subordinated to the care of the council of the elders. This council reveals itself as the judgment court for order and discipline in the congregation, which extends its authority (προνοία) as well over the bishop as over the congregation."<sup>1</sup>

The facts just recounted are singularly significant, and show in a remarkable way the gradual evolution of congregational or *pastoral* episcopacy.

But now comes the question: How did the congregational or pastoral episcopacy of the early centuries pass into the diocesan or prelatical episcopacy of mediæval and modern times? How did the chief officer of one community, the city bishop, come to have control over the officers of other communities? This is precisely the question put and answered by Dr. Hatch in the first two chapters of his *Growth of Church Institutions*. In what follows I propose to reproduce his answer in a condensed and abbreviated form, but as far as possible in his own words, in which case they will be enclosed in inverted commas.

We come now to the chief question: How did congregational episcopacy pass into diocesan or prelatical episcopacy? Hatch's answer.

"It has no doubt been sometimes maintained that the diocese in its modern sense is an institution of primitive times. But the recorded facts are far from supporting this view. They show that in the large majority of cases a bishop, presbyters, and deacons existed for every Christian community. As a rule a city had but a single community, and consequently a single organisation. The officers were officers, not of a district, but of a community. Where there

As a rule every Christian community had its bishop originally.

<sup>1</sup> "Sources of Ap. Canons," pp. 32, 33, 34. It should be added that Harnack puts the date of this document between the years 140 and 180.



Where there was more than one community in a city there was more than one bishop.

Exceptions: (1) Alexandria.

was more than one community in a city, there was as a rule more than one bishop (the decisive passage on this point is Epiphanius *Haeres.* lxviii., c. 7, who says that 'Alexandria never had two bishops as the other cities had'). Alexandria, therefore, Hatch says, "may be said to furnish the earliest example of a modern diocese." [Epiphanius, it is true, was not distinguished for critical discernment or sound judgment, and was highly credulous, so that there are many crudities and errors in his writings, but he was thoroughly honest, and is evidently repeating here what came within his wide personal observation and experience.]

(2) Rome.

"At Rome too," Hatch adds, "where the great size of the community prevented its meeting together in a common place of worship, the sense of oneness was preserved by the practice of having one consecration of the elements, and sending them round by the hands of messengers to the other congregations" (p. 17). We know that in the early part of the fourth century there were no less than forty churches in and around the city, all of which were under the oversight of the Roman bishop, so that here also, as well as in Alexandria, we have an example of a modern diocese. In some cases, too, mission churches were established by city churches in the country adjoining, and these mission churches in the country found it expedient and helpful to remain affiliated to the city churches which planted them, and under the jurisdiction of the city bishop.

(3) Mission Churches.

But as a rule each community, each town, each village had its bishop.

"But," Dr. Hatch goes on to show, "these exceptional cases do not vitiate the inference which the mass of facts forces upon us that in the greater part of the Christian world each community was complete in itself. Every town, and sometimes every village, had its bishop." <sup>1</sup> We have similar testimony from Dr. Gwatkin, who says: "We can safely say that early in the third century we find few signs (unless in Egypt) of any jurisdiction exercised by one church over another. All through the third century we miss the subordination of the *chorepiscopi* or country bishops to the bishops of their cities, which we might have expected to be the first step of the process. But when we next meet with them early in the fourth century their subordination is clear enough." <sup>2</sup>

How the evolution of diocesan and metropolitan episcopacy came about.

It was later still, however, that the evolution and main extension of diocesan and metropolitan episcopacy—

<sup>1</sup> "Growth of Church Institutions," pp. 16, 17, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Gwatkin's "Early Church History," Vol. I., pp. 307, 308.

prelatical episcopacy, that is—took place. Here in substance is Hatch's account of it. The result of the Teutonic invasions, he points out, was an amalgamation of races under a Teutonic king, but as the Teuton loved the country rather than the town, it was in the cities chiefly that all that survived of Rome gathered together. The schools preserved the Roman tongue, the courts preserved the Roman law, the church preserved the Roman Christianity; and of all this the bishop of the *civitas* was the centre. Round him the old Roman families gathered. His house was not infrequently the old *prætorium*, the residence of the Roman governor. Even his dress was that of a Roman official. Then there was the power that came of judicial status and wealth. The city bishop became in many cases a great landowner, through Roman landowners bequeathing their lands to him. He became a person of such wealth and power that the Frankish king, Chilperic, is reported as saying, "The only persons who reign are the bishops: our (royal) influence is perished, and is transferred to the bishops of the cities." "The permanent result of this importance and power of the city bishop was that when the country gradually became Christianised, instead of each newly-formed community having its complete ecclesiastical organisation, as had been the case in Asia Minor and North Africa, the authority of the city bishop was conceived to extend over all the communities within the district of which the city was the political centre. For in the fusion of Teutonic with what remained of Roman institutions the Roman *civitas* was taken as the centre of the Teutonic *gau* or county. It was in this way that the diocese in its modern sense came to exist; the conception of it was Teutonic, the framework was Roman."<sup>1</sup>

After the Teutonic invasions and the amalgamation of the races the bishop of the *civitas* became the centre of power and influence.

And the authority of the city bishop extended over all the communities of which the city was the centre.

"The diocesan system of Germany," Hatch affirms, "dates from the time of Boniface in the eighth century, and that of England from the time of Theodore in the seventh. The bishops of both countries were in the first instance missionary bishops. A large tract of country was assigned to them, as it is now assigned to bishops in Africa or India, for the purpose of evangelisation; and when it was Christianised the influence of the system which had established itself in Gaul spread both over the Rhine and across the Channel." Originally, "in the greater part of Gaul and Spain the majority of the communities in villages and country towns recognised or came to recognise no ecclesi-

So the diocesan system of Germany dates from Boniface (eighth century) and that of England from Theodore (seventh century).

How it was in Gaul and Spain originally.

<sup>1</sup> "Growth of Church Institutions," pp. 13, 14.

astical superior. . . . They were formed by the owners of great estates, who, being themselves Romans and Christians, built chapels in which they and their households might worship, and round which the new converts from paganism gradually clustered. Their officers were not elected, but nominated. They were appointed, paid, and dismissed by the owner of the estate on which they served. There was no necessary tie whatever between them and the bishop of the county town."<sup>1</sup> This was the earlier state of things ; but a change was now effected. "And it is of singular importance to note that the reformation which shaped the history of the West in all subsequent centuries was effected, under God, by the co-operation of Church and State, directly by the legislation of the Frankish prince, indirectly by the influence of the See of Rome."<sup>2</sup> But "both the co-operation itself, and the form which it took, were due to the enthusiasm and genius of our great countryman Boniface. To him more than to any other single cause the main features of the ecclesiastical systems of the West are due ; and from the lines of diocesan episcopacy which he laid down there was not until the Reformation any considerable departure." It is pointed out that those lines were in the main a revival of some elements of a system embodied in the canons of Chalcedon (451), the knowledge of which was probably brought to the West by Theodore of Tarsus, who seventy years before had reorganised the Church of England. Prior to Chalcedon, the Council of Nicæa (325) had already determined in its fourth canon that the ecclesiastical divisions and arrangements should follow the civil divisions of the Empire, while the sixth canon of the same Council had expressly sanctioned the metropolitan constitution, giving metropolitans authority and jurisdiction within prescribed territories—measures which had a great influence on subsequent developments. The enactments of the new system now established in Gaul and elsewhere were thus both ecclesiastical and civil. "The enactments are to be found without variation of phrase in the collections of Church Councils and in those of Frankish laws."<sup>3</sup>

"The main features of the new system have been so strongly marked on the face of Christendom for more than 1,100 years as to make it difficult for most persons to conceive of a time when they did not exist. They have again and again been treated as part of the essence of all Christian

The change to diocesan episcopacy in West due largely to Boniface.

The main lines of the system had been laid down by Nicæa and Chalcedon and brought to the West by Theodore. The ecclesiastical divisions to follow the civil.

<sup>1</sup> "Growth of Church Institutions," pp. 24, 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

organisation, and departures from them have been treated as violations of apostolic order. Their historical origin consequently both requires and deserves a careful examination; and it would be difficult to point to a more instructive collection of data for the history of ecclesiastical organisation than the collection of capitularies in the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, as edited either by Pertz or Boretius. The features in question are two: (1) The subordination of the clergy of a district to the bishop of the county town or chief city of the district; (2) The co-ordination of the bishops of a province into a single body, with the bishop of the metropolis at their head."<sup>1</sup> "One series enacts that a city bishop shall have jurisdiction over the whole area of which the city was the political centre; the other series enacts that the presbyters within that area shall recognise his jurisdiction."<sup>2</sup>

Data for the history of the organisation found in the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*.

The main features two:  
(1) The subordination of the clergy of a district to the bishop of the chief city.  
(2) The co-ordination of the bishops of a province into a single body, with the bishop of the metropolis at their head.

"Such," says Dr. Hatch, "was the origin of modern diocesan episcopacy. It grew up in the Frankish domain under the legislation of the Frankish princes and kings, by the co-operation of Church and State, at the instigation in the first instance of the great missionary Boniface. For some time previously the churches in outlying districts had no recognised ecclesiastical superior. They were now made subject to the bishop of the county town, and the bishop was required to exercise over them an active supervision."<sup>3</sup>

Sohm's account of the origin of the Church constitution is substantially similar. He says: "The constitution of the Church was in the main modelled on the organisation of the Empire. The city (*civitas*) was the lowest political unit of the Empire. It became the lowest political unit of the Church. In the constitution of the Church the territory of the city appeared as the episcopal diocese. In the constitution of the Empire the province, with the provincial governor, stood above the *civitas*: the episcopal dioceses were united in like manner under the direction of the *metropolitan*, the bishop of a provincial capital, forming an ecclesiastical province. In the constitution, from the fourth century, several provinces composed an imperial diocese, under an imperial governor (*vicarius*). The imperial diocese also formed, after the fourth century, part of the ecclesiastical constitution, as the district of a *patriarch*, to whom the metropolitans of the imperial dioceses were subordinate. Finally, the general union of the churches corresponded

Sohm's account similar.

<sup>1</sup> "The Growth of Church Institutions," p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 40.

to the general union of the Empire, with the imperial council (the so-called Œcumenical Council) as its organ."

"Thus in its old age, the Roman Empire bequeathed its constitution to the young Church, struggling upward with all the forces of life. It was its last great legacy to the future. In the form of an ecclesiastical constitution, the imperial constitution outlived the fall of the Empire. To this day the diocese of the Catholic bishop is the copy of the Roman *civitas*: the province of the Catholic archbishop the copy of the Roman imperial province; and the Catholic Church, under a Pope declared omnipotent by law, the copy of the ancient Roman Empire, with its Cæsars who claimed the world as their possession."<sup>1</sup>

As the French scholar, Desjardins, has shown in detail, the pagan organisation was everywhere the forerunner of the Christian.<sup>2</sup> Desjardins finds that virtually every city which had a *flamen* to superintend the worship of *Rome and Augustus* and of the *Divi Imperatores* became the seat of a Christian bishopric, when diocesan episcopacy evolved in Gaul; and every city which had a provincial priest of the imperial pagan cult became the seat of a metropolitan archbishop. "The conquering Christian Church," as Mommsen has it, "took its hierarchic weapons from the arsenal of the enemy."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sohm's "Outlines of Church History," pp. 47, 48.

<sup>2</sup> "Géographie historique et administrative de la Gaule romaine," III., 417, 418.

<sup>3</sup> Mommsen's "Provinces of the Roman Empire," I., 349.

## CHAPTER IV

THE EVOLUTION OF THE POPE : IN THE APOSTOLIC AND  
SUBAPOSTOLIC PERIOD HE IS UNDISCOVERABLE.

THE emergence of St. Peter as Roman bishop, with jurisdiction over the whole Church, was indeed, according to the Latin Church, due to no slow and gradual process of evolution. He came forth full-formed, as Minerva came full-armed from the head of Jupiter. The *Liberian Catalogue* of early Popes, which purports to have been made in the time of Pope Liberius in the fourth century, which (says Lightfoot) "appears with a certain show of authority," "had a great influence on later opinion in Rome and the West," and "formed the groundwork of the *Liber Pontificalis* . . . which had a sort of recognition as a summary of Papal history." <sup>1</sup> The *Liberian Catalogue* brings Peter to Rome as bishop in A.D. 30, and assigns his death to the year 55, thus giving him an episcopate of twenty-five years ; though singularly enough there is absolutely no trace or consciousness of him as bishop of Rome with primatial jurisdiction in apostolic history, least of all in the contemporary history of the Roman Church over which he is supposed to have presided ; and though there is hardly any fact of history more certain than that Peter had never been at Rome during those twenty-five years, but had been continuing to labour among the Jews and Jewish Christians of Palestine and Asia Minor as "apostle of the Circumcision." <sup>2</sup>

Assertion  
of the  
*Liberian  
Catalogue*  
that Peter  
was bishop  
of Rome  
for twenty-  
five years.

Opposed to  
all the evi-  
dence.

It is this Roman claim with respect to Peter that just now demands our notice. The claim is to this effect : (1) That by the Church's Head Peter was given supreme authority or primacy in the Apostolic Church ; (2) that at an early date he became Bishop of Rome, with supreme, plenary, and universal jurisdiction ; and (3) that his authority as Primate or Pope of the Church universal was transmitted to all his successors in the Roman chair. It is very remarkable that these claims are never so much as

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's "Clement of Rome," Part I., Vol. I., pp. 64, 65.

<sup>2</sup> See Gal. ii. 17.

Very remarkable this claim never hinted at in contemporary history nor for well nigh two centuries.

hinted at in contemporary history, and never thought of till two Christian centuries have almost run their course ; and that, although there were hints of it before, it was only in the fifth century that the theory of a universal episcopate based on Matt. xvi. 18, was formulated and elaborated under Celestine, Bishop of Rome, and his archdeacon Leo, who became Leo the Great and, strictly speaking, the first Pope. The claims, however, are still put forward and reiterated in all their fulness, so that the duty now devolves on us of examining the grounds on which they are based. When that is done we shall be in a position to trace from its very insignificant beginnings the genesis and the successive steps of the evolution, and to see that it was indeed a slow and gradual process, extending over nineteen centuries, for even in our own time considerable accretions, such as the dogma of Papal infallibility, have been added to the development.

Was St. Peter Prince of the Apostles and Primate of the whole Church ? What is the evidence ? The only proof worthy of notice is that in Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

I. The first question to be considered is—Was Peter invested with *supreme and sovereign authority over the apostles, and over the whole Apostolic Church* ? If so, what is the evidence of such investiture ?

Now the primary proof adduced in support of it—the only one worthy of notice—is the well-known passage in Matt. xvi. 18, 19, which is blazoned round the dome of St. Peter's at Rome : "Thou art Peter (*πέτρος*), and on this rock (*πέτρα*) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Various interpretations of the passage.

How are we to understand the words "On this *πέτρα* I will build my church ?" One interpretation is that the "rock" is Christ Himself. "Rock," "foundation," "corner stone," it is pointed out, are in the Old Testament common and familiar names for the Messiah ;<sup>1</sup> and these names are applied to our Lord by Himself,<sup>2</sup> by Peter,<sup>3</sup> and by Paul.<sup>4</sup> It is noted too that our Lord Himself is "the foundation laid in Zion," "the rock" and the "corner stone" in a sense which can be affirmed of no other, for "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup> Hence Augustine's interpretation : "The reason

St. Augustine

<sup>1</sup> See especially Isa. xxviii. 16 ; Ps. cxviii. 22 ; and the Psalms *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxi. 42.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. ii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iv. 11 ; 1 Pet. ii. 4-8.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 11.

why the Lord says, 'On this rock I will build my church,' is that Peter had said: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' On this rock, which thou hast confessed, says He, I will build my church. For Christ was the rock upon which also Peter himself was built, for 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'"<sup>1</sup>

Origen's exegesis is not very different from Augustine's. Origen.

The rock, he says, in his comment on the passage in Matthew, had reference to the faith of Peter, in which Peter represents all believers. He says, too, that every apostle was as much a foundation of the Church as Peter.

And this in substance was the view of such Fathers as Hilary, Gregory of Nyssa and Chrysostom. It is note-

Other  
Fathers.

worthy, besides, that even Fathers who apply the words to Peter repudiate the exclusive claims to superiority which Rome has based on them. Tertullian treats with scorn the claim of the Roman bishop to the title "pontifex maximus," and "bishop of bishops";<sup>2</sup> while Cyprian maintains that the power here conferred on Peter was exactly the same as that bestowed on all the apostles; and that for one bishop to claim superiority over other bishops was nothing short of tyranny.<sup>3</sup> "I suppose," says Dr. Salmon, "there is not a text in the whole New Testament on which the opinion of the Fathers is so divided, and you have to come down late indeed before any one finds the bishop of Rome there."<sup>4</sup>

Even those  
who apply  
the words to  
Peter re-  
pudiate his  
exclusive  
claim to  
superiority.

Cyprian  
maintains  
that the  
same power  
was be-  
stowed on  
all the  
apostles.

But suppose that *πέτρα* here does refer to Peter. I am not in the least concerned to controvert it: it is the opinion of some of our best and soundest commentators. Assuming it to be the correct view, it is very far indeed from justifying the Roman claim of primacy for Peter. For—

1. The power (whatever it was) here given to Peter is in Matt. xviii. 18 extended to all the apostles; and in John xx. 19-23 it is given to the whole Church. (See Westcott on the latter passage.) With characteristic boldness, promptness, and energy Peter was the first to step forward, on the day of Pentecost, to address the multitude assembled, and to apply the keys of admission when three thousand souls were added to the Church; while in his visit to Cornelius he took the first step in the admission of the Gentiles. In the great work of founding the Chris-

Evidence  
that the  
same power  
given to all  
the apostles,  
and to the  
whole  
Church.

<sup>1</sup> "Tract. in Evang. Joannis," 124, § 5.

<sup>2</sup> "De Pudicitia," Chap. I.

<sup>3</sup> See Epp., lix. 14; lv. 8; "De Unit. Eccl.," iv.; Epist., xxxiii. 1; "Concil. Carthag.," in Cyprian, p. 436.

<sup>4</sup> "Infallibility of the Church," Lect. XVIII., p. 329.



tian Church he was thus honoured by the Master in being permitted to take the initiative. But Paul and Barnabas and others take an equally great and important part in planting and founding churches both in Asia and in Europe. Hence the Apostle Paul can say to the Ephesians: "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone."<sup>1</sup>; and John can write in the Apocalypse<sup>2</sup> of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" which he saw "descending out of heaven from God," that "the wall of the city had *twelve foundations*, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." But now—

Did Peter assume the rôle of "Prince of the Apostles"?

2. Is there any trace anywhere in the New Testament that Peter assumed the rôle of "Prince of the Apostles," as Rome has called him? Any proof that he either claimed or exercised that supremacy and primacy over the other apostles, and over the whole Church with which the Church of Rome has invested him? Any proof that such a claim was acknowledged and endorsed by the other apostles?

Such an assumption inconsistent with Christ's own teaching,

In the first place, such an assumption of superiority on Peter's part would have been grossly inconsistent with his Master's own express instructions and admonitions. He had in the most explicit and emphatic way condemned it beforehand. When "the mother of Zebedee's children" sought for high places in His kingdom for her two sons, He said: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."<sup>3</sup> In virtue of the great vital and fundamental principle of the priesthood of all believers, Church power, the very power given to Peter in Matt. xvi. 18, 19, was extended, as we have seen, to all Christians, to all members of the Church, so that even the office-bearers elected by them could only act ministerially, and as representing the Church.

and with the power given to the whole Church.

But to do him justice St. Peter never either claimed or exercised such supremacy. If any primacy has been conferred on him we shall have an opportunity of seeing it

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ii. 19, 20,

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxi. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xx. 25.

exhibited at the conference known as the Council of Jerusalem, of which we have an account in Acts xv. Dissension having arisen over the question of circumcision in the Church at Antioch, it was "determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." It is very curious, however, that in this expression of their "determination," even at the outset and opening of the case, the Primate is ignored. Peter is there, but it is simply as one of the "apostles." "And when they were come, they were received of the Church, and of the apostles and elders." What! Not received of the Primate! Has Peter so completely forgotten the amenities and courtesies due to his high place as "Prince of the Apostles?" As the conference proceeds, too, Peter takes a part exactly similar to that of the others, standing on an equal platform with the rest, while the decisions arrived at by the Council are invariably described as "the decrees of the apostles and elders." All through the Primate is unnoticed and ignored both by the Council and by its historian. The sacred historian himself (St. Luke) knows St. Peter as one of the apostles, but is as ignorant of his Primacy as are the delegates from Antioch and the whole Church. Nor is there any trace of it anywhere through the whole *Acts of the Apostles*. And this becomes "curiouser and curiouser" (to adopt the phrase of Alice in Wonderland) when it is recalled that in this year of the Council (51 is Lightfoot's date for it), Peter has already been Bishop of Rome and Primate of the whole Church for some twenty years according to the Liberian Catalogue, or for ten years according to the date in Jerome's version of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius; although on the other hand it is as certain as anything in history can be that Peter has never at this date been out of Palestine!

That he had no such power proved by the Council of Jerusalem;

where the Primate is ignored, and the decisions are "the decrees of the apostles and elders."

But it should not be forgotten that Paul also has something to say relative to Peter's attitude and action at that same Council. It is quite certain that St. Paul recognised no supremacy or primacy in St. Peter, or subordination to Peter on his own part. Referring to what took place at the Council itself, and at the private conference connected with it (for that we take to be the reference in the opening verses of Gal. ii.) Paul affirms very emphatically that he "owed nothing to the apostles of the Circumcision. I maintained my independence and my equality." Such is Lightfoot's summary and paraphrase of the apostle's

The supremacy of Peter not recognised by Paul at the Council.

statement in Gal. ii. 5, 6, 9. And, what is not less significant, Paul declares on the same occasion that to Peter was committed "the apostleship of the Circumcision," and to himself "the apostleship of the Uncircumcision." "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the Circumcision (v. 9). Paul has actually the audacity to dub the "Prince of the Apostles" as "the apostle of the Circumcision," and to say that, while it devolves on him (Paul) to go to the heathen, Peter's ministry and apostleship are confined to the Circumcision; and Peter meekly accepts of that statement of the case. There is not much sign of the Primacy of the whole Church there!

And there is still less on the next occasion on which we meet the two together. At Antioch a little later, "before that certain came from James, Peter did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." <sup>1</sup> Whereupon Paul "withstood him to the face, because he stood condemned"—which Lightfoot paraphrases thus: "At Antioch I was more than an equal. I openly rebuked the leading apostle of the Circumcision for his conduct condemned itself." A curious piece of conduct it was on the part of the first infallible Pope! There he stands branded and pilloried to all time as a most fallible, frail, and erring mortal, having to submit to the scathing rebuke of the great apostle to the Gentiles as "acting the part of a hypocrite." A singular Prince of Apostles! A pretty Primate indeed! The Primacy, however, is no more in evidence than the Infallibility! Paul at any rate did not believe in either. And although there is nothing more certain than that so far Peter had never been at Rome at all, he has been, according to the Roman theory, already Bishop of Rome for a long series of years. Alice did not find "curiouser" things in Wonderland than Roman fiction has provided for us here.

But indeed St. Peter himself was as little conscious of being the Prince of the Apostles, Bishop of Rome, and Primate of the whole Church as the other members of the Council were. • We have two letters of his, written near the end of his life, for in the second he "knows that shortly he must put off his tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 12.

At Antioch  
Paul with-  
stands Peter  
to the face.

Peter's posi-  
tion as con-  
ceived and  
represented  
by himself.

hath showed me." <sup>1</sup> Is there any evidence of Primacy in these epistles? Quite the contrary. True to his office as "apostle of the Circumcision," Peter writes to the "sojourners of the Dispersion," that is, to the Jewish Christians "in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," and, just as Paul is accustomed to do, begins each letter by designating himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ." He is neither "Bishop of Rome nor Primate of the Church." Instead of offering even the remotest hint of a claim of supremacy, here is how he writes: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder . . . Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock." <sup>2</sup> It would require a very powerful microscope to detect the Primate here, or anywhere else in these epistles.

Incidentally we have already seen what Paul's view of the matter was, and how far he was, either at Jerusalem or Antioch, from acknowledging any official primacy in Peter. He was not fond of comparing himself with others, but there were times when he felt compelled reluctantly to such comparisons, times therefore when he does not shrink from claiming that he "was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles." <sup>3</sup> But his silence is in some respects more eloquent than his uttered words. Over and over again, and in a great variety of forms, he takes occasion to remind the churches of our Lord's Headship of the Church. <sup>4</sup> How extraordinary that in all these cases the apostle misses the opportunity, nay, deliberately throws away the opportunity, of reminding the churches to which he is writing that, in addition to their Invisible Head, they had a visible head also, and Christ an earthly vicar and representative in Peter. Is it not singular from the point of view of those who endorse the Roman claim that from none of the apostles or New Testament writers have we so much as a hint on the subject?

But after all perhaps we have been on the wrong track. We may have gone to the wrong source for information. The man with deepest insight among the apostles was without doubt the "beloved disciple." He was emphatically the seer and prophetic spirit among them. He had

Paul's view of the matter generally

He himself "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles."

Dwells at length on the headship of Christ, but never hints at Peter's headship.

Surely the apostle John will not fail to make clear the position of his friend Peter!

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. i. 14.    <sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3.    <sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11. 1 Cor. ii. 3; Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; v. 23, 24; Col. i. 18; ii. 19.

known Peter long and well, had been much associated with him, and was too honest and loyal and true not to confer on Peter any office or honour the Master had bestowed on him. He at least will not conceal the supremacy and headship of his friend, and the vital and important fact that Peter had been invested with jurisdiction over the Church at large, and with unerring infallibility to guide her. In this instance, however, Peter's friend sadly fails him. He is silent as the grave on Peter's alleged claim to supremacy. But stay! He does refer to a personage who, he says, "loveth to have the pre-eminence."<sup>1</sup> but when we look closer we discover that the name of that ambitious person was not Peter, but Diotrophes, in whom undoubtedly we find an early but not unworthy precursor of the tenants of the Vatican!

Conclusion. It is thus quite certain, then, that St. Peter had no supreme authority or primacy in the apostolic Church, that he neither claimed nor exercised it himself, nor was recognised as possessing it by his fellow apostles; and that whatever power was conferred on him in Matt. xvi. 18 was afterwards bestowed on all the apostles, and ultimately extended in substance to the whole body of the disciples.

Was St. Peter bishop of Rome? II. The second question is—Was Peter Bishop of Rome for twenty-five years? Was he bishop of Rome at all for even the shortest period? According to the *Liberian Catalogue* already referred to he was Bishop of Rome from A.D. 30 to A.D. 55; according to Jerome's version of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius he was bishop from A.D. 42 to A.D. 67.

The tradition of twenty-five years' episcopate legendary. The tradition of a twenty-five years' episcopate is, however, purely legendary, without an atom of historical evidence of the slightest value to support it. It is proverbially difficult to prove a negative; but even the negative in this instance is put beyond question by indubitable and stubborn facts. We know from Acts xv. and Gal. ii. 1-9 that as late as 51 or 52 A.D. Peter was still at Jerusalem, labouring among the Jews as the "apostle of the Circumcision." Later still<sup>2</sup> we find him at Antioch; and from Paul's reference to him in 1 Cor. ix. 5 we gather that about the year 57, when that epistle was written, Peter, accompanied by his wife, was still engaged on his apostolic mission, doubtless among his Jewish brethren; for, as Origen testifies: "Peter appears to have preached in Pontus, Galatia,

<sup>1</sup> 3 John 9.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. ii. 11.

Bithynia, Cappadocia and Asia *to the Jews of the Dispersion*; and at last having come to Rome he was crucified with his head downwards." <sup>1</sup> He was certainly not at Rome when Paul wrote to that church in the year 58. Had he been there as bishop and Primate his name could not have been omitted in the numerous salutations of Rom. xvi. There is no reference to him, and no trace of him in the Acts when Paul arrives at Rome in the year 61. Had Peter been at Rome for any considerable time prior to the Neronian persecution, the fact could not have been passed over without mention in the Acts, in the Epistle to the Romans (so full of salutations), or in the various letters which Paul wrote from Rome during his first imprisonment. In the very latest of all his epistles, written at the close of his second imprisonment and just before the end, probably in the year 67 (2 Tim.), he says: "I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (iv. 6), and adds: "At my first answer" (that is, the *first act* of the second trial) "no man stood with me, but all forsook me" (v. 16). Dr. Salmon pertinently asks: "Was Peter one of the deserters?" and adds: "If Peter was ever at Rome, it was after the date of Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy," that is, it was after A.D. 66 or 67.<sup>2</sup> But Jerome's twenty-five years' episcopate ended in that very year 67, and the twenty-five years of the *Liberian Catalogue* had ended twelve years earlier! The facts are so stubborn and impracticable that in neither case will they make room for a twenty-five years', or even for a single year's episcopate! Eusebius assigns the martyrdom of Peter and Paul to the year 67, Jerome to 68.

Not at Rome in 58.

Nor in 61.

"If Peter was ever at Rome it was after the date of Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy."

A tradition that Peter did die at Rome.

Reference of Dionysius to it.

Caius and the "trophies" of the apostles.

There is, however, from a comparatively early date, a tradition that Peter did suffer martyrdom at Rome. Clement of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthian Church, speaks both of Peter and Paul as having borne their testimony, but does not say where they suffered. Dionysius of Corinth, writing *more than a century after their death*, says that Peter and Paul, having taught in like manner in Italy, suffered martyrdom about the same time.<sup>3</sup> Caius<sup>4</sup> says "he can show the trophies of the apostles," the one at the foot of the Vatican, the other on the Ostian Road. But it has been pointed out that such trophies, or monuments, or

<sup>1</sup> See Eusebius, "H. E.," III., 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Salmon's "Infallibility of the Church," p. 342.

<sup>3</sup> Eus., "H. E.," II., 25.

<sup>4</sup> Eus., "H. E.," II., 25.

martyr-memorials might exist at Rome, although Peter and Paul did not suffer there. There was a martyr memorial of Laurence at Ravenna, although Laurence did not suffer at Ravenna; of Stephen at Ancona, although he did not suffer there; of the twelve apostles at Constantinople, although they did not suffer there. Again, Origen says, in words already quoted from Eusebius, that "Peter appears to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia, to the Jews of the Dispersion. And at last; having come to Rome, he was crucified with his head downwards." On the whole, then, although the tradition begins late, and although the evidence for it has failed to convince scholars like Lipsius and Harnack, it is not impossible or improbable that Peter did visit Rome just before his martyrdom, and suffered there; but that he was Bishop of Rome for even the shortest period there is no evidence of the least historical value. There would be as good reason (indeed much better reason) for calling him Bishop of Jerusalem, or Bishop of Cæsarea, or Bishop of Antioch, or of any of the numerous cities which he visited. But to represent Peter as a bishop at all is inconsistent with all *contemporary* evidence, and was, as we shall see, the product of a legend, or rather of a deliberate fiction which appeared towards the end of the second century.

Origen's  
reference.

Of evidence  
that he was  
Bishop of  
Rome there  
is none.

Peter was  
an apostle,  
not a bishop.

For note, farther, Peter was an *apostle*, not a bishop. It is now recognised by scholars that the apostolate and the episcopate were two entirely different offices, the one including the "prophetic" or charismatic ministry, which belonged to the Church at large, unattached and itinerant or missionary; the other *local* and *congregational*, tied down to a particular place and community. Nor, as Lightfoot has shown, did the episcopate grow out of the apostolate. "The opinion hazarded by Theodoret, and adopted by many later writers, that the same officers in the Church who were first called apostles came afterwards to be designated bishops, is baseless. If the two offices had been identical the substitution of the one name for the other would have required some explanation. But in fact the functions of the apostle and the bishop differed widely. The apostle, like the prophet or the evangelist, held no *local* office. He was essentially, as his name denotes, a missionary moving about from place to place, founding and confirming new brotherhoods. . . . The episcopate was formed not out of the apostolic order by localisation, but out of the presbyteral by elevation; and the title, which originally was common

to all, came at length to be appropriated to the chief among them." <sup>1</sup> Accordingly, even those early writers who first represent Peter or Paul or both as coming to Rome, and as appointing bishops there, never speak of Peter and Paul as themselves "bishops," but as "apostles," and carefully distinguish between them as "apostles" and the "bishops" appointed by them. Irenæus says: "The blessed apostles [he has just mentioned them by name—Peter and Paul] having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. To him succeeded Anencletus; and after him, in the *third* place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric." <sup>2</sup> Clement is the "third" from Linus. Peter and Paul are "apostles" and as such are excluded from the list of bishops. Tertullian, in a work written some twenty years later, represents not Linus, but Clement as the first bishop ordained by Peter, but like Irenæus, speaks of Peter as an "apostle." <sup>3</sup> Eusebius, in like manner, always describes Peter as an "apostle," never as a "bishop," and names Linus as "the first to receive the episcopate of the Roman Church." <sup>4</sup>

The early writers never speak of Peter and Paul as "bishops" but as "apostles." Irenæus, for example,

and Tertullian,

and Eusebius.

"I cannot find," says Bishop Lightfoot, "that any writer for the first two centuries and more speaks of St. Peter as bishop of Rome." <sup>5</sup> As the late Dr. Salmon, of Dublin, in his work on *Papal Infallibility*, pointed out (as indeed Lipsius had done before him), the real inventor of the story of Peter's Roman episcopate was the editor of the Clementine romance which appeared in Rome about the end of the second century. In the so-called epistle of Clement to James prefixed to the *Homilies* (an Ebionite fiction and forgery) Peter is represented as saying, "Since, as I have been taught by the Lord and Teacher Jesus Christ, whose apostle I am, the day of my death is approaching, I lay hands upon this Clement as your bishop, and to him I entrust my chair of discourse. . . . Wherefore I communicate to him the power of binding and loosing, so that with respect to everything which he shall ordain on earth, it shall be decreed in the heavens." The chronological impossibility of Peter ordaining Clement we shall see later. Lipsius and others think that not the legend of the episcopate only, but that of Peter's coming to Rome at all, has been derived from the same tainted source. "The religious romance,"

Story an Ebionite fiction which appeared about end of second century.

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's "Philippians," pp. 195, 196, sixth edition.

<sup>2</sup> "Adv. Hær.," III., c. 3, 1, 2, 3. <sup>3</sup> "De Praescr. Hær.," c. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Eus., "H. E.," III., 14; VI., 2. <sup>5</sup> "S. Clem.," Vol. II., p. 501.



as Lightfoot shows <sup>1</sup> " seems to have been a favourite style of composition with the Essene Ebionites ; and, in the lack of authentic information relating to the apostles, Catholic writers eagerly and unsuspectingly gathered incidents from writings of which they repudiated the doctrines." " Can we wonder " (asks Dr. Bright in his *Roman See in the Early Church*, p. 15) " that a tradition grew up in the West, extending itself also to the East, on the basis of a statement which possessed such attractions as to obscure its highly suspicious connection with a copious Ebionitish romance, or that in minds like so many in the West, unsuspecting of masked heresy, the fictitious story of Clement's adventures, as it became current, should establish the notion of Peter's episcopate, and Clement's immediate succession, until at the end of the fourth century, Jerome could assert the one with a detail as to its twenty-five years' duration, and speak of the other as believed " by most Latins." It is a curious and noteworthy fact that just as that part of the Clementine romance, known as the *Epistle to James* was " made the starting point of the most momentous and gigantic of mediæval forgeries, the *Isidorian Decretals*," <sup>2</sup> so the epistle of Clement to James in the same romance played a chief part in starting the legend of the Petrine episcopate, and so in the genesis of the Papacy itself. That Peter was ever Bishop of Rome is thus an unhistorical legend, started by an Ebionite forgery ; but take away the Petrine episcopate and the whole fabric of the Papacy collapses like a house of cards deprived of its foundation.

A Bishop of Rome in the first century is an anachronism.

But to speak of a monarchical Bishop of Rome at all in the early period in question is a gross and palpable anachronism. The epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthian Church, with the other contemporary evidence, makes it certain that in the year 95 or 96 Clement himself neither was a bishop in the later sense, nor knew anything of such an office. As Lightfoot has shown, he uses the terms " bishops " and " presbyters " interchangeably, just as they are used in the New Testament ; and as Lightfoot also admits, Clement was at the utmost nothing more than the *primus inter pares* among the presbyters. Clement is not named or referred to in the epistle from first to last ; that it was written by him we learn from other sources. It is addressed by " the Church sojourning at Rome to the Church sojourning at

<sup>1</sup> " S. Paul and the Three." " Galatians," p. 367.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, " St. Clement," Vol. I., p. 415.

Corinth." As Dr. Gwatkin says, Clement was "no bishop of the Ignatian type, much less of the Papal sort."<sup>1</sup> He (Dr. Gwatkin) says again: "It is as certain as any historical fact can well be that there was no bishop in the important Church of Corinth at the time of Clement's writing. The trouble had arisen from the deposition of certain presbyters—the very question of all others on which the bishop must have something to say. Yet from beginning to end of a long letter, Clement not only never mentions a bishop or a vacancy in the see, but never gives the faintest hint that the presbyters of Corinth either had or ought to have any sort or kind of ecclesiastical superiors; and Clement must have known perfectly well whether the apostles set a bishop over the presbyters they appointed at Corinth."

And the fact that monarchical episcopacy was still unknown and non-existent at Rome is confirmed by still later testimony. From ten to twenty years later, according to Lightfoot, Ignatius "a staunch advocate of episcopacy," writes to the Roman Church. "Yet in the letter to the Church of Rome," says Lightfoot, "there is not the faintest allusion to the episcopal office from first to last." He entreats the Roman Christians not to intercede on his behalf, or to rob him of the crown of martyrdom, but makes no reference to the bishop, "no mention of Clement or of Clement's successor" (Lightfoot). That he is not mentioned by Ignatius is clear proof of his non-existence; as indeed we have evidence of his non-existence still later. The *Pastor of Hermas* may have been written between 140 and 145. Now, as Dr. Gwatkin puts it, "there is no trace of a bishop of Rome even in Hermas," a Roman Christian, whose work was written at Rome. He states expressly that it is "the presbyters" who "preside over" the Roman Church. "You will read the words in this city *along with the presbyters who preside over the Church.*"<sup>2</sup> When "bishops" are named by him it is in the plural, and evidently as another name for "presbyters," for where "presbyters" are mentioned there is no mention of "bishops," and when the term "bishops," occurs, "presbyters" are not named. In his enumeration of Church officers in one place Hermas speaks of "apostles and bishops and teachers and deacons," with regard to which Lightfoot suggested that "bishops" here may be used in its later sense, and that "presbyters"

Ignatius  
knows  
nothing of a  
Bishop of  
Rome.

Nor does  
Hermas.

<sup>1</sup> "Early Church History," I., p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> "Vision," II., 4. Cf. also II., 2, and III., 9.

Dr. Sanday's  
conclusion.

may be referred to in the term "teachers." But Lightfoot wrote thus before the discovery and publication of the *Didaché*. In this *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* "teachers" are clearly distinguished from the *local* office bearers, and are associated with the "apostles and prophets," that is, with the detached, charismatic, itinerant ministry, who were not tied down to one locality, but moved from place to place.<sup>1</sup> There is no fairer or more unbiassed writer on this question than Dr. Sanday, who shows that till Hermas "the presbyterial government continued in Rome, and that Hermas (circ. 145) marks the point at which the presbyterial government is passing into the episcopal." To speak of a monarchical Bishop of Rome prior to the end of the first century is, to say the least, an unscholarly anachronism.

Lists of  
early Roman  
bishops self-  
contradictory

True, lists of Roman bishops, so-called, begin to be given from the later years of the second century onwards; but these lists are self-contradictory, and not only irreconcilable with one another, but with the facts of contemporary history. In Irenæus Linus is the first Bishop of Rome; with Tertullian Clement is the first. In one list Clement is the first, in another second, in another third, and in another fourth Bishop of Rome. Let us, however, take the two witnesses who are at once the earliest and most important, Irenæus and Tertullian, and examine their testimony more closely.

The state-  
ment of  
Irenæus  
tested.

Irenæus says that "the blessed apostles [Peter and Paul, whom he has just named] having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. To him succeeded Anencletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric."<sup>2</sup> This Irenæus describes as a "tradition" that has come down through the succession of bishops. What Lightfoot calls the best form of the tradition assigns twelve years to Linus, twelve years to Anencletus, and nine years to Clement's episcopate. The term of office assigned to Clement extends from the year 90 or 91 to the end of the first century. Linus would thus be appointed by Peter and Paul in 67; Anencletus would succeed him in 79, and Clement would succeed Anencletus in 90 or 91.<sup>3</sup>

Now we know by indubitable evidence that this state-

<sup>1</sup> Cf., "Did.," XIII., 2, and especially XV., 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Adv. Hær.," iii., c. 3, 1, 2, 3.

<sup>3</sup> See Lightfoot's "Clement," Part I., Vol. I., pp. 67, 81, 343.

ment of Irenæus contains some gross and glaring errors. There is nothing more absolutely certain than that the Roman Church was not "founded" by Peter and Paul. We know that before ever Paul had seen Rome (and the remark applies still more to Peter) there was what Lightfoot calls "a large and flourishing church" there. "Full six years before the Neronian outbreak the brethren of Rome are so numerous" (says Lightfoot) "and so influential as to elicit from St. Paul the largest and most important letter which he ever wrote. In this letter he salutes a far greater number of persons than in any other. In the three years which elapsed before he arrived in the metropolis their number must have increased largely."<sup>1</sup> The crass blunder that Peter and Paul "founded" the Church in Rome enables us to test the value of the "tradition" which handed down such an error as a weighty fact, and enables us to estimate the historical knowledge and critical judgment of Irenæus in reporting it with such confidence.

But not a whit more correct is the further statement of Irenæus that "Clement was allotted the bishopric in the third place from the apostles." Clement, we have seen, knows nothing of a monarchical bishop of either Corinth or Rome. He is simply one of the "presbyters," who, according to Hermas, writing later, "preside over" the Roman Church. Even Ignatius, writing to the Church of Rome, knows nothing of a bishop of Rome. "There is no trace of a bishop of Rome even in Hermas" (Gwatkin), *i.e.*, probably more than thirty years later than Clement. Now, if there was no monarchical bishop in Rome in the nineties of the first century, and long after the beginning of the second century, still less was Linus a bishop in the seventies, and Anencletus in the eighties. But the blundering of Irenæus about the founding of the Roman Church, and with regard to Clement and the rest, is of a piece with his gross inaccuracy when he refers to early church history, and to church order in particular. Dr. Edwin A. Abbott in the *Expositor* for May, 1895, refers to "his very numerous mistakes," affirming that "his evidence on matters of detail is frequently not to be trusted." He (Irenæus) gravely informs us, for example, that Jesus lived to be an old man, and that His public ministry continued for nearly twenty years.<sup>2</sup> In referring to the subject of early church order in particular he is hopelessly "at sea." Both he and Clement of Alexandria are so obsessed and obfuscated by

<sup>1</sup> "Philippians," p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> "Hæc," B. II., XXII., 5. 6.

the church order existing in their own time that they can conceive of no other existing at an earlier time, and so misread and misrepresent the order plainly indicated in the New Testament. They both represent Paul as "summoning the bishops *and* presbyters" of Ephesus to meet him at Miletus.<sup>1</sup> So in offering these lists of early Roman bishops Irenæus and others are simply throwing back a form of the episcopate which existed in their own time to an earlier time, when *contemporary* evidence proves that a very different state of things obtained.

At times indeed Irenæus had glimmering of the true view. Dr. Hatch points it out as "significant" that Irenæus in his letter to Victor of Rome<sup>2</sup> speaks of those before Soter who "presided over the Church which thou now rulest"—namely, "Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus"—as "presbyters"; while in his letter to Florinus<sup>3</sup> he says: "these doctrines the *presbyters* who were before us, and who were companions of the apostles, did not deliver to thee"; and a little farther on in the same letter he calls Polycarp "that blessed and apostolic presbyter."

The statement of Tertullian tested.

Tertullian's testimony is not only open to the criticism first passed on that of Irenæus, it is fatuous to the point of absurdity. Misled evidently by the preposterous tale started by the Ebionite fiction, Tertullian represents Clement to have been ordained first Bishop of Rome by Peter. Now, remember the chronology. Clement's "term of office" (to use Lightfoot's language) was roughly the last decade of the first century, that is, from 90 or 91 to the end of the century. His appointment to office, whatever that office was, must have taken place about the year 90 or 91. But according to every form of the tradition, Peter must have already perished in 67 or 68, perhaps in 64, so that, after having been above a score of years in the grave, he must have risen from the dead to ordain Clement! This is the indubitable tradition that has been handed down "in due succession from the beginning," and which Tertullian flings in the face of the heretics to confound them! "Let the heretics produce" (this is his challenge) "the original records of their churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops, running down in due succession from the beginning in such a manner that their first bishop shall be able to show for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the apostles or of apostolic

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 17, 28. <sup>2</sup> Euseb., "H. E.," V., 24. <sup>3</sup> Euseb., "H. E.," V., 20.

men, a man, moreover, who continued steadfast with the apostles. For this is the manner in which the apostolic churches transmit their registers; as the Church of Smyrna which records that Polycarp was placed therein; as also the Church of Rome which makes Clement to have been ordained\* in like manner by Peter." <sup>1</sup> Precious "records" indeed! Tertullian is evidently unaware that he is simply reproducing a fiction created and started by the very heretics he is denouncing!

The truth is that to speak of Linus, Anencletus and Clement as bishops in the later sense is an exceedingly crude anachronism. Lipsius, after a careful and scholarly investigation of the different lists, and of all the evidence, concludes that Linus, Anencletus, and Clement were Roman presbyters (that is, presbyter-bishops in the New Testament sense) at the close of the first century; that Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus and Telesphorus were presbyter-bishops between the beginning of the second century and the year 139; and that after that date there were bishops in the later sense. Dr. Sanday's conclusion is in substance somewhat similar.

When you thus trace historically, and with special regard to the recognised facts of contemporary history, the evolution of the Papacy, what a foundation of sand the huge structure is found to rest on!

III. The third question—Was Peter's authority as Bishop of Rome and Primate of the Church Universal transmitted to his successors in the Roman chair?—has been already answered in the replies given to the first and second questions. We have seen (1) that Peter was not Prince of the apostles, nor Primate of the Apostolic Church—that each of the apostles had the same power and authority conferred on him as were given to Peter. We have seen (2) that there is no evidence of the slightest value that he was either Bishop of Rome or Primate of the Church Universal. He could not therefore transmit to others a supremacy and power which he did not possess himself. And even if he had possessed the supreme power, as Linus, Anencletus, and Clement were simply Roman presbyters, there was no individual Bishop of Rome in the later sense for some fifty years after his death, none therefore to whom he could transmit that power. The whole series of Roman claims are thus, when closely cross-examined, found to be based on a prodigious and audacious fiction.

Was St. Peter's authority as Bishop of Rome transmitted to his successors in the Roman chair?

<sup>1</sup> "De Præs. Hæret.," Chap. XXXII.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FIRST BEGINNINGS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE POPE.

The vastness of the evolution in this case.

THE evolutionary process, so slow and gradual as to be almost imperceptible in its early stages, which changed the free, spiritual, democratically governed Church of the New Testament into the colossal ecclesiastical despotism which we call the Papacy, which for much more than a thousand years succeeded in imposing itself on a large part of Christendom as original Christianity, which at length grew to such pretensions that it assumed an absolute sovereignty over all things sublunary, the civil and the secular as well as the spiritual, over kings and emperors as well as their subjects, who were all vassals to the Pope, so that proud emperors were fain to perform the menial office of a stable-boy, holding the stirrup of the Pope's palfrey while he mounted into the saddle, and the mightiest ruler of his time was kept standing for three entire days in succession in his shirt of penitence, bare-footed and bare-headed amid frost and snow, outside the gate of the Castle of Canossa, with tears and entreaties suing for admission, and for removal of the ban which the monk-Pope had placed on him—the evolutionary process, I say, that gradually led to such results is without doubt the most stupendous and astonishing metamorphosis which history records.

There is a legitimate development.

But here is one which on the face of it seems alien to the spirit and genius of Christianity.

There is, as has been pointed out, a legitimate development in which the original principle, type, and life of the growing organism is preserved and continued. But a growth so alien to the original character and genius of Christianity, which perverts and mutilates the simple spiritual teaching of our Lord and His apostles, and incorporates into the body of its doctrine, worship and government a leaven of pagan rites and corruptions and of worldly policy, which becomes at last a positive reversal of the fundamental ideas and principles of primitive Christianity—as, for example, where it turns a system of salvation by grace into a system of salvation by human merit, and substitutes an elaborate and mechanical system of “penance” for the inward moral change which the New Testament calls “repentance”; which at all the great crises in its career

has not scrupled to buttress its pretentious claims by unblushing forgery and fraud ; such a development it is not possible to justify ; it is not only something quite different from the religion taught by Christ, it is in a great degree its antithesis and contradiction.

My present task is to trace the history and mark the successive stages in this singular development, and to do this as briefly as may be.

We have seen that there is absolutely no trace of any-thing resembling a Papal supremacy, or even of an individual Bishop of Rome, in the apostolic or even in the sub-apostolic period.

No trace of Papacy in the apostolic or sub-apostolic ages.

The earliest premonition of the growing power of the Bishop of Rome is given in the consideration and influence to which the Church of Rome has risen at the opening of the second century—a rise into regard and importance which was quite natural and inevitable in the church of the great metropolis of the Empire, and which had begun before there was any single Bishop of Rome, and when its rulers were simple presbyter-bishops (a plurality of them, observe) after the pattern of those of the New Testament. The city of Rome itself had a pre-eminence and grandeur in the thoughts of men, to which the greatest and most splendid of modern cities affords no parallel. To that ancient and mighty capital, the mistress of such a vast and far-extending empire, the nations of the earth had become accustomed to look with profound deference and even awe, and a similar feeling of respect soon began to be transferred to the church which had its home in the Eternal City. The Christians at Rome at the time of the Neronian persecution in the year 64 A.D. are described by Tacitus as a huge multitude (*ingens multitudo*) ; and in the second century the church there had become not only large, but wealthy and influential. Rome was the resort of all schools, sects, and parties. Teachers of all sorts, false as well as true, repaired to the great metropolis to disseminate their sentiments, because there they found not only the largest audience, but the best means of propagating their doctrines over the Empire. But there was another and more special reason for the veneration and regard in which the Roman Church was held.

The earliest harbinger of it is the influence of the Roman Church.

What this was due to :

the prestige of the great capital :

the greatness and wealth of the Roman Church.

Rome the resort of all schools and parties.

There were certain churches which in the early Christian centuries were treated with special deference and reverence as reputed *sedes apostolicae*, churches founded or supposed to be founded by apostles, such as Jerusalem, Antioch,

A reputed *sedes apostolica*.



Corinth and Alexandria. It is quite certain, as we have seen, that the Roman Church was not founded by either Peter or Paul ; but as towards the end of the second century a belief began to prevail to that effect, as, moreover, Paul certainly resided there for a considerable time as a prisoner, and Peter may have been there for a short time, Rome was from the end of the second century onwards held in special veneration as a *sedes apostolica*, and as the one bearer in the West of apostolic tradition.

A custodian,  
therefore,  
of apostolic  
tradition.

It is as a custodian of apostolic tradition that Irenæus assigns a certain eminence to that Church. In opposition to the Valentinian Gnostics, in the third book of his work *Against Heresies*, he affirms that the orthodox are able to trace their doctrines back to the apostles through the successions of the various churches. But as it would be tedious to go through all these, he takes the case of the Church of Rome, which he calls "the very great and ancient and universally known church." "For unto that church on account of its greater eminence [or antiquity] it is necessary that every church, that is, the faithful from all quarters, should resort, since in that church the tradition from the apostles has always been preserved by those who come from all quarters"—that is, who flock to the capital from all parts of the Empire. "The meaning is," as Dr. Gwatkin says, "that the faith of the Roman Church is continually refreshed and kept true by those Christians who from all parts of the world come to Rome."<sup>1</sup>

Became the  
Christian  
metropolis.

After the fall of Jerusalem, too, Rome became the Christian metropolis—the great central church to which in all difficulties the Christians turned for help. It is thither that Polycarp repairs to consult with regard to some controverted questions. It is there that Justin Martyr goes to offer his defence of Christianity. Thither come the Gnostics, Valentinus, Marcion and others to disseminate their heresies. It was to it that poor and persecuted churches turned for assistance and sympathy, and did not turn in vain. Dionysius of Corinth, writing in the second century, tells how the Roman Church "did good to all the brethren in every way and sent contributions to many churches in every city," "refreshing the needy in their want, furnishing what was necessary to the brethren condemned to the mines," and "encouraging those that came from abroad with consolatory words."<sup>2</sup>

Its liber-  
ality and  
charity.

<sup>1</sup> "Early Church History," Vol. II., p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb., "H. E.," IV., 23, 9.

As yet, however, it is the *Church* of Rome, not any individual bishop or pastor, that is prominent and influential. We have seen already how true that was in the time of Clement, whose epistle to the Church of Corinth was written not in his own name, but in the name of the Church he represents, and begins: "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God which sojourns at Corinth." As Lightfoot remarks: "The name and personality of Clement are absorbed in the church of which he is the spokesman."<sup>1</sup> "There is all the difference in the world," Lightfoot adds, "between the attitude of Rome towards other churches at the close of the first century, when the Romans as a community remonstrate on terms of equality with the Corinthians on their irregularities, strong only in the righteousness of their cause . . . and its attitude at the close of the second century, when Victor, the bishop, excommunicates the churches of Asia Minor for clinging to a usage in regard to the celebration of Easter which had been handed down to them from the apostles, and thus foments, instead of healing, dissensions." Clement himself, as Lightfoot shows, is not a bishop in the later sense, but one of a number of presbyter-bishops, perhaps *primus inter pares*. For another century or so from the time of Clement it was the Church and not the bishop that was influential, and the bishop owed his importance to the Church.

As yet it is the *Church*, not the *pastor*, that is prominent.

But certain fundamental changes are already in process of evolution. On what does the presence of Christ with His people, the grace of His Spirit, and the privilege of free approach to God, depend? The answer which the New Testament makes to that question is decisive and unequivocal. It answers in the words of our Lord Himself, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them";<sup>2</sup> in the words of Paul, who greets as Christians "all who in any place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord";<sup>3</sup> and in the words of Peter, who calls all Christians "an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup> And the spiritual view of the Church, so clearly taught in the New Testament, still persists in the second century. But another and very different answer was already being evolved—that which made the Church depend upon the hierarchy, and on exclusive sacerdotal powers transmitted

Certain changes already begun.

<sup>1</sup> "Clement of Rome," Appendix, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xviii, 20.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. i, 2.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. ii, 5.

through the hierarchy—the idea of an exclusive priesthood, with an authoritative and exclusive stewardship of grace and truth, concentrated in and derived through the bishop—an idea first broached apparently in the acrimonious struggle between the two rival Roman bishops, Hippolytus and Callistus ;<sup>1</sup> but more fully elaborated and formulated by Cyprian. “It was this very interpretation of the Church,” says Coleridge, “that according to my conviction constituted the first and fundamental apostasy.” As soon as this idea entered and prevailed, the bishop began to take the place which the New Testament assigns to the Christian congregation ; the Roman bishop takes the place of the Roman Church, and, in addition, assumes the greater influence and the wider jurisdiction which he claimed as bishop of a *sedes apostolica*, as head of the clergy in the metropolis of the Empire, and still more as occupant of the chair of Peter. — As the Church is conceived by Cyprian as dependent on the bishop, according to Cyprian’s ideas, and the ideas already current, it was inevitable that even Cyprian should regard the so-called *Cathedra Petri* as in some sense the centre of the Church’s unity.

The bishop takes the place of the Church.

The fiction started by the Clementine romance, just now appears.

For remember we have now reached the date when the fiction, first started by the apocryphal Clementine romance, was already in circulation, the fiction which represented Peter as becoming Bishop of Rome, and as transmitting to his successors in the Roman chair the prerogatives that Peter himself was alleged to have received from Christ. Accordingly, from this time forward this audacious Ebionite fiction is the chief stock-in-trade on which the Roman bishop has to draw in support of the arrogant claims of jurisdiction which he begins to make, but which were not fully elaborated till later. The full realisation of the daring vision of the Ebionite fiction is still in the far future ; but the idea having once entered even from so tainted a source, and to some extent permeated the Church, soon began to embody itself in actual fact ; not, however, without having to struggle hard against freer and more spiritual ideas. For already we begin to hear the ominous rumble of a deep but sinister “motion toiling in the gloom, the spirit of the years to come”—the colossal despotism of the Papacy of the Middle Ages—“yearning to mix itself with life.”

But the idea for the first time takes practical concrete

The idea first takes concrete shape in Victor.

<sup>1</sup> See “Refutation of all Heresies, Philosophumena,” Proe-mium ; cf. also Harnack’s “Hist. of Dogma,” Engl. trans., ii, 70, note.

shape, and seeks to "wed itself with fact"—in other words, the Bishop of Rome puts himself in the place in which Irenæus puts the Church of Rome, or rather assumes a part which even the Church of Rome would not have dared to play—when Victor, the Roman bishop, in the last decade of the second century, issues a decree in his own name and authority excommunicating the churches of Asia Minor, some of the most ancient and most illustrious mother churches, because of a difference with regard to the Easter observance. He excommunicated them, that is, from his own Roman Church, and he tried to induce other churches to join with him; but in this he failed. Not only did the churches of Asia led by Polycrates refuse to acknowledge his jurisdiction or submit to his decree; but other churches and bishops, Eusebius says, "sharply rebuked Victor" for attempting to cut off from communion churches which adhered to the tradition of their fathers. Irenæus was one of those who in the name of the brethren in Gaul sharply admonished the Roman bishop. The arrogant proceeding of the latter only serves to bring out the fact that his authority and jurisdiction are not as yet recognised beyond the bounds of his own Roman Church. Victor was, perhaps, a little premature in his assumption; but in Victor's act the Papacy was born; the spirit was born that would yet embody itself in a Leo, a Gregory the Great, a Nicholas, and a Hildebrand.

Stephen, who became Bishop of Rome in 252, was if possible a man of even more arrogant hierarchical spirit than Victor; and, so far as the records indicate, he was the first to claim explicitly that as successor of Peter in the Roman chair he was entitled to make the law and tradition of the Roman Church the law for all churches. Two Spanish bishops had been deposed by a synod in Spain as *libellatici*, as well as offenders in other respects; and they themselves, it is said, admitted the justice of the sentence. One of them, however, repaired to Rome, and laid his case before Stephen, who reversed the sentence of the Spanish synod, and restored the bishop to office. On the Church in Spain referring for advice to the Church in Africa, a synod at Carthage, with Cyprian as president, pronounced the sentence of the Roman bishop invalid and void. Thus both the Church in Spain and the Church in Africa, led by Cyprian, refuse to accept the decision of the Roman bishop, and repudiate his authority both as a ruler and as an infallible guide.

It reappears fifty years later with still greater arrogance and deliberation in Stephen.

Nor was this the only case in which the same Stephen sought to impose his authority on a Church outside his own Roman one, and was met by a point-blank refusal to submit to it. In the year 253 he excommunicated the bishops of Cappadocia, Galatia and Cilicia, denouncing them as anabaptists because they advocated the re-baptism of heretics; but, led by Firmilian, the great Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, they treated with contempt the insolent attempt of Stephen to coerce or crush them, setting the tradition of their own apostolic churches against the tradition of the Roman Church, and recommending him to take care that in excommunicating churches as ancient as his own he was not excommunicating himself! As we learn from Cyprian, this is how Firmilian, the Bishop of Cæsarea, addressed the Roman hierarch: "How great is the sin of which you have incurred the guilt in cutting yourself off from so many Christian flocks. For do not deceive yourself; it is yourself you have cut off; since he is the real schismatic who makes himself an apostate from the communion of ecclesiastical unity. While you think that you can cut off all from your communion, it is yourself whom you cut off from communion with all."

From Asia Minor the controversy passed to North Africa. In 255 two synods held at Carthage, one consisting of eighteen and the other of seventy-one bishops, declared the baptism of heretics to be invalid; and Cyprian courteously wrote to Stephen informing him of their decision. Stephen replied in a characteristically arrogant and truculent manner, refused an audience to the bishops sent as delegates from Africa, and even forbade the Christians at Rome to show them any hospitality. Another Council at Carthage of eighty-seven bishops, with Cyprian in the chair, reaffirmed the position they had already taken, and declined to yield to Stephen's truculent dictation. In his address to the synod at Carthage Cyprian said: "None of us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, or by tyrannical terror forces his colleagues to an unwilling obedience; inasmuch as every bishop in the free use of his liberty and power has the right of forming his own judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he can himself judge another." That was a bit of advice free of charge, to his Holiness of Rome. Cyprian laid the matter before Firmilian of Cæsarea, who of course concurred with the Africans, and in his letter to Cyprian speaks of the "successor of Peter in the Roman chair" with great

disrespect, draws a parallel between him and Judas Iscariot, and pays him back liberally in his own coin of personal abuse, noting in particular his proficiency in "audacity," "insolence," "impudence," "ignorance," and "folly"! So far at this stage are the churches of Asia Minor and the churches of Spain and Africa from acknowledging any supremacy or primacy or any infallibility in the occupant of the Roman chair. Cyprian very emphatically repudiated the claim of supremacy, and explicitly affirmed that "the other apostles were just what Peter was, endowed with an equal share of office and power."<sup>1</sup> "There is not," says the late Dr. Bright, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Oxford, "one word in all his [Cyprian's] correspondence on Roman Church affairs which will admit of being interpreted in a Papalist sense."<sup>2</sup>

and Cyprian's.

But where genuine facts of history failed her Rome never hesitated to manufacture facts to suit her purpose. Owing to the respect in which Cyprian was held, and the weight attaching to his judgment, it was felt to be of great importance to have his testimony in her favour. The writings of Cyprian were therefore at an early date audaciously and fraudulently interpolated and corrupted in the interest of the fiction of Roman supremacy, and had thus a powerful influence on the development and aggrandisement of the Papal power. We shall be amazed as we proceed at the frequency with which Rome had recourse to fraud and falsehood in furthering her ambitious ends.

Cyprian's writings interpolated and completed in the interest of the Roman claim.

The jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome was naturally extended by the "metropolitan constitution" which was given to the Church some time prior to its recognition by the State. There were certain cities, such as Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Rome, whose bishops were recognised as "metropolitans," each of whom was regarded as in a sense presiding over the "eparchy" or "province" in which the city was situated, and which included many churches, bishops and clergy. Although in theory (as Cyprian had been careful to point out) all the bishops were equal in spiritual powers, the "metropolitan" (who was generally the bishop of the chief town or city of the province) was given a certain precedence in dignity over the other bishops of the province. He called together councils within the province, and presided over them, and had a somewhat vague and undefined authority within it. The

The jurisdiction of the Roman bishop extended by the metropolitan constitution.

<sup>1</sup> "De Unitate," 4.

<sup>2</sup> "The Roman See in the Early Church," p. 47.

fourth Nicene canon prescribed that a bishop could not be appointed within his province without his approval. The Bishop of Rome of course got the benefit of this new arrangement, and was recognised as having jurisdiction not only in the city of Rome, but in the province of which it was the centre.

And by the  
rise of the  
patriarch-  
ates.

Then came later the rise of the great patriarchates, which, like the "metropolitan" constitution, followed mainly, though not entirely, the civil divisions of the Empire. Speaking in a general way, an ordinary bishop presided over what was then called a "*parish*" (*παροικία*); a "metropolitan" presided over a "*province*"; and a "patriarch" over a "*diocese*" (not a "diocese" in the modern sense, but a "*civil*" "diocese," which embraced a wide region with many provinces and metropolitans). At the time of the Council of Nicæa (325) the terms "patriarch" and "patriarchate" were not in use, but the *thing* which they denoted was already to some extent in existence, and was described even then as "an ancient custom," as it is in the sixth canon of that Council. The Bishops of Antioch, Rome and Alexandria are regarded by the sixth canon as having a sort of superior rank, and as each having jurisdiction over a region which included many "metropolitans." The Bishop of Antioch had jurisdiction over fifteen "provinces" in the East; the Bishop of Alexandria had some sort of authority over Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis; and the Bishop of Rome presided over the ten suburbicarian provinces, which were under the rule of the *vicarius* of the civil diocese of Rome, including most of Central Italy and the whole of Lower Italy, with Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica; although the whole of Italy was not within his jurisdiction. It is profoundly significant that such were the limits of his jurisdiction expressly defined by the great Nicene Council in 325; and that other bishops elsewhere were invested with exactly similar authority. The Bishop of Rome has jurisdiction within a certain area; let the Bishops of Antioch and Alexandria have supervision over similar areas assigned to them. Such was the purport of the sixth canon of Nicæa.

But already  
as Peter's  
successor  
he claims  
supremacy  
over the  
whole  
Church.

But the Bishop of Rome had begun, as we have seen, to look far beyond that, even to supremacy as Peter's successor over the whole Church; and no opportunity was allowed to slip of imposing his authority and asserting his jurisdiction far beyond the limits of his suburbicarian diocese. Outside those bounds, however, he continued to meet with

determined and strenuous resistance; so that, although circumstances of various kinds favoured his ambitious aims, it was a good while before his supremacy was acquiesced in even in the West.

The conversion of Constantine to the Christian faith created a new epoch not only in the fortunes of Christianity, but in the aggrandisement of the Roman pontiff. The Church ceased to be an *ecclesia pressa*, was favoured and patronised by the civil power, and put into the position of a State church. The wealth and dignity, the power and prestige of the bishops generally were immensely heightened; their jurisdiction was greatly extended; and they became in a large measure civil as well as ecclesiastical officials. But above all, the bishop of the great capital rose immediately into a position of commanding influence and power. We shall have an opportunity of seeing many signs and evidences of this later. But meantime one of the first official acts of Constantine after his conversion served to enhance the consideration of the Roman see. So early as the year 313, after the battle of the Milvian Bridge, the occasion on which he professed to adopt Christianity, when the Donatists applied to him to have their grievances investigated by the bishops of Gaul, who were supposed to be neutral and unbiassed, a commission of bishops, only three of whom belonged to Gaul, was authorised by the Emperor to enquire into the case; and over this commission, which held its meeting in the palace of the Lateran, the Roman bishop Miltiades (corrupted into Melchiades) was appointed president. Both the place assigned to him as president, and the influential part taken by him in the case, were made the most of to advance and enhance the importance and prestige of the Roman bishop.

When under Constantine the Church became a State church the bishop of the capital rose to great influence.

The Bishop of Rome appointed president of a commission to investigate the case of the Donatists.

But how little the Papal claim of universal supremacy, and the claim of infallibility in the guidance of the Church from the beginning, advanced by the Vatican Council in our own day, were recognised or even thought of in the fourth century, we have clear and indubitable evidence in connection with the great Council of Nicæa held in 325.

The claims of the Vatican Council not recognised by the great Council of Nicæa.

1. The Vatican Council of 1870 has declared that from the beginning the Roman bishop had such a gift of teaching from God as made him, when speaking officially, an infallible guide in matters of faith. Now here in the great crisis which came upon the Church in the Arian controversy, and which threatened to rend it asunder, was a golden opportunity for the exercise of this gift of infallible guidance on a

The claim of infallibility in matters of faith.

The Arian controversy a fine opportunity of displaying it.



doctrine of the most vital importance. "Could there ever be," it has been asked, "a *dignior nodus* for his intervention, a more imperious call for the fulfilment of so unparalleled a trust? Why did not Pope Sylvester speak *ex cathedra* against the Arian heresy, and promulgate from the fountain-head of orthodox teaching a decision which should have been an end of all strife?"<sup>1</sup> Curiously, it did not occur to him to do so, and still more curiously, it did not occur to the great Emperor or his ecclesiastical advisers, Bishops Hosius and Eusebius, or to any one else, to ask Sylvester to give the Church the benefit of his infallible guidance in this most vital matter of faith. It did not occur even to the great Council itself to invite such a deliverance. As a matter of fact, nobody thought of applying for such a decisive utterance from Rome because nobody in the least believed at that time that the Bishop of Rome had the gift now imputed to him. If Christians then believed with regard to Sylvester what Rome affirms to have been an integral part of Christian belief from the beginning, and if he himself believed that he possessed an infallible *magisterium*, when speaking under certain conditions, why was he not appealed to? or why did he not express his mind, and end all controversy, without being appealed to? Why was a great Council called together at enormous expense and trouble from the ends of the earth to give this deliverance—a deliverance, moreover, which did not bring peace, and in spite of which the Church continued to be torn asunder by bitter strife and alienation and heartburning for fifty years? The simple fact is that no one then credited him with the possession of the gift now claimed on his behalf, and least of all did he believe in it himself.

No one asked him to display it, because no one then believed he possessed it.

The Nicene Council gave no right of appeal to the Bishop of Rome.

2. But note another significant thing which the Nicene Council failed to do. While in its fifth canon it provided for a right of appeal to *provincial synods* by excommunicated persons who thought themselves wronged or aggrieved, *no right of appeal was given them to the Bishop of Rome*, whose tribunal, it is contended, was *jure divino* the supreme court of appeal for the whole Church. "How the Nicene fathers came to ignore a jurisdiction so august in its origin and sanction" is certainly very remarkable, and supplies food for reflection.

The limit of the Bishop of Rome's jurisdiction fixed by the Council of Nicæa.

3. I have referred already to the sixth canon of the same Council, but it now demands somewhat closer attention. Here is the first sentence of it, in which its main purport

<sup>1</sup> Bright's "Roman See in the Early Church," p. 66.

is embodied: "Let the ancient customs which exist in Egypt and Lybia and Pentapolis remain in force, to the effect that the Bishop of Alexandria should have authority over all these [districts mentioned], *since this is customary also for the bishop who is in Rome*; and similarly both as to Antioch and in the other eparchies (or provinces) let the churches have their privileges secured for them."

What region, then, was it customary for the Bishop of Rome to preside over? Now Rufinus, who translated the Nicene Canons towards the end of the fourth century, says that "Rome had the care of the *suburbicarian churches*." But what were these? Hefele points out that at the head of the vicariate of Rome were two officers, the *præfectus urbi* and the *vicarius urbi*. The *præfectus urbi* exercised authority over the city of Rome, and in a suburban circle as far as the hundredth milestone. The boundary of the *vicarius urbi* comprised ten provinces, which included (as has been stated already) most of Central Italy, the whole of Lower Italy with Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. Hefele thought that the former, that is, the narrower territory of the *præfectus urbi*, must be understood as that referred to in the canon, although he tried to show that the authority of the Bishop of Rome must not be limited to that. But as the Bishop of Alexandria is given authority over Egypt, Lybia and the Pentapolis, an immense territory which included many provinces and metropolitans, it seems more probable that the wider district which embraced the whole territory of the *vicarius urbi* had been assigned to the Bishop of Rome. "The Bishop of Rome has authority over a single province, contained within a circle reaching as far as the hundredth milestone from the city; let the Bishop of Alexandria have authority over Egypt, Lybia and Pentapolis—a territory at least ten times as large as that given to the Roman bishop," would be an absurd *non sequitur*. It is far more likely that the bishop of the metropolis of the Empire, who was regarded even in the East as having precedence over all bishops, had been given jurisdiction over the larger territory of the *vicarius urbi*.<sup>1</sup> And this view is confirmed by the letter of the Council of Sardica a few years later to Julius, Bishop of Rome, which regards him as the official head of the churches in Sicily, Sardinia, and Italy.<sup>2</sup> But mark that that is *the whole* of the

<sup>1</sup> See Hefele's "History of the Christian Councils," Vol. I., p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> Hardouin, I., 654.

territory he is recognised as having jurisdiction over by the Council of Nicæa.

How Rome misrepresented the decisions of the Nicene Council.

4. We must not pass away from the proceedings of that Council without some notice of an attempt by Rome to manipulate and alter its decisions in her own interest. It is very noteworthy, for it is very characteristic of the habitual methods of the Papacy, that in the Roman version of the Nicene Canons, which was circulated in the West and which was produced later at the Council of Chalcedon, the sentence I have already given, the opening sentence of the sixth canon, is preceded by the words: *Quod ecclesia Romana semper habuit primatum*. These words are not in the original Greek canons of the Council, but a spurious and gratuitous addition by Rome, showing how unscrupulous she was in asserting and buttressing her pretensions to supremacy, so that the student of her history is simply amazed and appalled at the frequency and deliberateness with which she resorts to such methods.

The removal of the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople.

Its effect on the Papacy.

It was in 325 that the canons to which I have been referring were passed at Nicæa. Soon after that date an event occurred which served not a little to enlarge the influence and further the aggrandisement of the Roman see. That was the removal in 330 of the seat of civil empire from Rome to the new city erected by Constantine on the Bosphorus, and called after himself Constantinople. It may seem strange and paradoxical to say that the withdrawal of the Emperor and his Court, with all its power and magnificence, from the Eternal City helped to advance the rise of the Papal power; but it is literally true. The Bishop of Rome thus ceased to be overshadowed and dwarfed, and to have his ambitious aims and actions hampered and kept in check by the presence in Rome of a still greater potentate. It is true that the Emperor still sought to control and restrain his more obtrusive and offensive movements from Constantinople; but such attempts were apt to be feeble and impotent just because of their remoteness. The forged *Donation of Constantine* which formed a part of the notorious *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals* (of which we shall hear more later on) affirmed that Constantine, when he was baptised by Sylvester, the Roman bishop, in 324 (as a matter of fact, he was not baptised till 337, and then by Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, not by Sylvester), he (Constantine) presented Sylvester with the palace of the Lateran, with independent and exclusive dominion over the city of Rome, and over all

provinces, places, and cities of Italy and of the West, with all imperial insignia, thus antedating the rise of the temporal power of the Papacy by some five centuries ; and, with reference to his withdrawal from Rome to the new city that had risen at Byzantium, the Emperor is represented as saying in this precious forgery : " We have transferred the seal of our power and authority to the Eastern parts, seeing that where the Lord of heaven has set up the head of sacerdotal authority it is not meet that any Emperor should have there an earthly authority." Accordingly Dante in his great poem represents Constantine as removing his seat of empire to the new city on the Bosphorus in order that is so doing " he might give the Pastor room." Although the *Donation* was a forgery of some centuries later, that undoubtedly was the effect of the removal of the imperial Court from Rome to Byzantium. It gave " more room." to the Pastor whose seat was on the Tiber—more room to expand in, more room to extend his sway, and to surround and adorn himself with the trappings of royal splendour. To no inconsiderable degree the Bishop of Rome began to take the place and appropriate to himself the prerogatives and power the Emperor had thus vacated. The dominion which he professed to claim was indeed primarily *spiritual*, but it was all the more effective even in the secular and political sphere because of its supposed spiritual basis ; and its ways and methods were hardly less worldly or less unscrupulous than those of imperial Rome had been. It was the steady ambition of the Popes to make Rome what Dante called her—" the divinely appointed Queen of the Earth " ; and there is much point and truth in the sarcastic phrase of Hobbes when he describes the Papacy as " the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof." It is unquestionable that there were occasions in history when the said ghostly apparition must have seemed more terrible even to certain titular lords of the world than ordinary flesh and blood.

Why, according to the forged *Donation of Constantine*, the removal took place.

The Papal ambition.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PAPAL ENCROACHMENTS CONTINUED BUT RESISTED (330—432)

The West as a rule orthodox; the East in fourth century torn by the Arian controversy.

The orthodox minority in the East naturally appeal to the West, especially to Rome and its bishop.

And he made the most of such appeals.

Certain civil cases over the Empire determined by the law of the city of Rome.

Yet the interference of the Roman bishop resented.

THE Western Church was as a rule more tranquil and free from controversy than the East. This was so in the fourth century when the West remained predominantly orthodox, while the East was kept in perpetual strife and turmoil over the various phases of the Arian controversy. It was natural, too, that the orthodox *minority* in the East should seek support in the West, especially from the great and influential Roman Church and its bishop; and that his decisions on their behalf should be prized and lauded by those who got the benefit of them, and their *authoritativeness* and *final character* insisted on, much more than otherwise they would have been. Nor was the Roman bishop slow to interpose authoritatively in such cases, to assert the claims to universal oversight he had begun to make, and to make the most of the appeals that came to him. He often met with stern opposition, and severe rebuffs, but on the whole the circumstances of the time tended greatly to assist him in extending his jurisdiction. Not only was Rome held to be the only apostolic see in the West, to which those in doubt respecting apostolic doctrine and tradition were accustomed to refer; the disposition to regard Rome as the great ecclesiastical centre of appeal was strengthened by the fact that in the provincial civil courts over the empire cases not settled by local law and custom were determined according to the law of the city of Rome.<sup>1</sup> Yet in the East the interference of the Roman bishop in the affairs of the Church there continued to be deeply resented. Thus, when Julius, the Bishop of Rome, admitted to communion Athanasius and some other orthodox bishops who had been deposed in the East, and not only restored them to their several sees, but summoned a number of the Eastern bishops to appear before him and answer for their proceedings, and threatened to tolerate them no longer, the Eastern bishops, met in Council at Antioch, declared in

<sup>1</sup> Digest, I., iii., 32.

their reply that the church of Rome as a school of the apostles and a metropolis of piety was worthy of all honour, but that he, Julius, as a foreign bishop, had no right to act as judge in their affairs and decisions with regard to any they might expel, expressed their indignation at his so gratuitously abrogating their decrees, assailed his meddling interference as a violation of ecclesiastical right and order, and affirmed that every synod was free to decide as it thought best, and that the fact that he (Julius) was bishop of a great city gave him no superiority over other bishops of apostolic sees.<sup>1</sup> That was a pretty smart slap in the face for Julius, and was technically quite just. No doubt Athanasius and the other bishops had been deeply wronged, and had very real grievances to be redressed; and no doubt the Antiochene Council he was opposing had the taint of heresy on it, while Julius was on the side of orthodoxy. But on the other hand he had no right to interfere as he did. In attempting to restore Athanasius to his see at Alexandria, and Marcellus to his at Ancyra, Julius was very audaciously trespassing where by the canons of the great Œcumenical Council of Nicæa he had no jurisdiction—no jurisdiction but what was based on fiction and fraud. But now see how circumstances favoured Julius and his ambitious aims.

The action of Julius with respect to certain orthodox bishops bitterly resented by the Eastern bishops.

Their rebuke of Julius severe, but technically just.

It was in 341 that those edifying amenities passed between him and the Eastern bishops met at Antioch. A couple of years later an opportunity arose which enabled Julius at once to pay off to those bishops the score they had made against him, and to extend his jurisdiction (temporarily, at least) in the East by the reinstatement of those very bishops. As the Arian controversy was still raging, and threatening to divide the Church and the Empire, the two Emperors, Constantius and Constans, called together in 343 a Council to meet at Sardica (now Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria) in the interest of unity and peace. It was meant to be a great Œcumenical Council, like Nicæa; but when Athanasius and the other deposed bishops were granted permission to sit and vote in it, the Eastern bishops, as a body, to the number of seventy-six, withdrew, and formed themselves into an opposition Council at Philippopolis in Thrace. The bishops who remained—they were ninety-four in number—proceeded to confer the following privileges upon Julius, the Roman bishop:—

How Julius was enabled to retaliate.

A Council called at Sardica.

The deposed Eastern bishops permitted to sit and vote at it and the Eastern bishops withdrew.

Privileges conferred on Julius by the bishops remaining.

<sup>1</sup> See "Eccles. Histories" of Socrates, II., 15, and Sozomen, III., 8.

1. When a bishop is deposed or condemned, and believes that injustice has been done him, the synod which judged him shall write to the Roman bishop, Julius, so that if necessary the investigation may be renewed by the bishops of the neighbouring province, and he himself may name the judges.

2. That in such a case the vacant bishopric shall not be filled up till the Roman bishop shall have received notice, and proceeded as above.

3. If, in such a case, the deposed bishop appeal to the bishop of Rome, and the latter considers a new inquiry to be advisable, he may commit it to the bishops of the neighbouring province, and may also send to it presbyters out of the body of his clergy to assist in the inquiry.

Things to be  
noted about  
these de-  
crees.

To appreciate these decrees a few things have to be carefully noted and kept in mind.

1. You will not understand their real purport unless you bear in mind what their simple object was—namely, *to secure the restoration of the deposed bishops*. The recollection of that fact throws a flood of light on them.

2. Remember further that the decisions of provincial synods were still regarded as being as a rule binding and final. Pope Siricius in 392, about fifty years later, when asked to reverse the decision of a synod at Capua, declared himself incompetent to entertain a question already decided by competent judges, and Ambrose, referring to the same matter, held that the decision of a judicial committee nominated by the Synod was of the same binding force as the Synod itself.<sup>1</sup>

3. Note again the peculiar circumstances in which the decrees were passed. The Eastern bishops in a body had withdrawn, all but those from the East *who had been deposed*, and who had been sojourning with their brethren in the West, especially at Rome. What less service can the Western bishops do for their friends, the deposed bishops, than unite with them in passing a measure which will reverse the decrees deposing them, secure their reinstatement in their old sees, and provide them, and any others oppressed like them, with a strong protector in one who is known to be a friend of orthodoxy, as Julius was. The deposed bishops who were present were thus voting for their own restoration.

4. But see how qualified and limited the power given to Julius by these decrees was. He is not authorised, *motu*

<sup>1</sup> Hardouin, I. 859.

*proprio*, to cite the cause to Rome, or initiate a new inquiry; it was left to the synod which had adjudicated in the case or to the deposed bishop to refer or not to refer the case to Julius as they chose. And then, further, he was not empowered to decide the case himself; but if he did not see his way to ratify the deposition, he might secure a new trial by summoning a new Council composed of the bishops of a neighbouring province. By such wire entanglements is the authority and freedom of the sovereign pontiff hampered. Even the Sardican Council, where the orthodox bishops can do as they please, are singularly chary and stingy in the small modicum of power which they confer on their Roman brother!

5. And carefully circumscribed and limited though the power was, it was not given as a right, but as a sort of honorary distinction, out of reverence for the memory of Peter.

6. And it was given to Julius *personally*—his successors are not named, though it was sure, of course, to be pleaded as a precedent.

7. But above all, observe, that slight and attenuated though the power given him was, and shackled by such a statute of provoking limitations, that power did not belong to him, it was not recognised as *inherent* in him, as bishop or Pope. It was *conferred on him* by the decrees of the Council. Even from the decrees of Sardica we learn how little power the Bishop of Rome had in himself, how circumscribed his jurisdiction was, and with what jealousy and stinginess its extension was permitted. Nor, except in so far as they served his purpose, did Pope Julius himself pay much attention to them. As Duchesne remarks: "After, as before, this legislation with regard to appeals, the Apostolic See continued to receive them; but there is no evidence to show that in this matter it conformed to the procedure laid down at Sardica. Instead of confining himself to questioning the decisions and appointing new judges, the Pope continued to decide the appeal himself."<sup>1</sup>

Owing to the secession of the Eastern bishops already referred to, the Council of Sardica was never recognised as œcumenical, but only as a local synod of the West, nor were its decrees regarded as binding or in the least respected in the East. But although they were soon forgotten in the East, they were not forgotten in the West,

The Council of Sardica not œcumenical, but much made of its decrees,

<sup>1</sup> Duchesne's "Early History of the Church," English trans., Vol. II., p. 180.



which were even cited as Nicene.

but capital made out of them; and they were actually cited as Nicene Canons by Popes who can hardly have been ignorant that they were *not* Nicene.

The prestige of the Roman bishop enhanced by the fact that he was generally orthodox.

The part taken by Julius in this matter, let me say in passing from this subject, suggests a circumstance which added much to the prestige and influence of the Roman bishop. In the Arian controversy, and in the other great Trinitarian and Christological controversies which succeeded it, the Roman prelate was almost always on the side of orthodoxy, and the side that was ultimately victorious.

Notable exceptions to the rule.

There were indeed some very notable and memorable exceptions to this general rule. There was the case of the

Liberius.

Roman bishop Liberius, who in order to secure his liberation from exile, to which he had been consigned by the Emperor Constantius, compromised his orthodoxy and his character as an infallible guide in matters of faith by signing in 358 a document renouncing communion with Athanasius, assenting to the proceedings of the Arian party, and "sacrificing," according to Döllinger, "the Nicene doctrines." There was the case of the Roman bishop

Vigilius.

Vigilius (540—555), who was induced by the Emperor Justinian, in order to conciliate the Monophysites, to agree to the condemnation of the doctrines of the *Three Chapters*. And there was the still more notorious case

Honorius.

of the Roman bishop Honorius (625—638), who very emphatically endorsed the monothelite heresy. As a general rule, however, the Bishop of Rome was found among the ranks of those who were regarded as orthodox in doctrine.

The patriarch dependent on imperial Court; the Bishop of Rome much less so.

The Patriarch of Constantinople was so dependent on the ever changing moods of the imperial Court, and was so apt to succumb to these, that he was not regarded as a safe standard of orthodoxy; whereas the Roman bishop was generally so *independent* of these, and had acquired such a reputation for being orthodox in doctrine, that it became common for persons in doubt, or wanting support, to have recourse to Rome for advice and guidance, opportunities which, with consummate craft, she seldom failed to turn to her advantage. But already we can see that such

Some who appealed to him, however, staggered by his arrogance.

persons are not a little staggered and taken aback by the arrogant pretensions of the Roman bishop, and his claim to superior authority. Referring to certain brethren who carried a letter of the Eastern bishops to Rome, Basil the Great says that his brother Gregory might have gone with him if he had had to deal with "a gentleman (*ἀνδρὶ ἐὺγενώμονι*), but being quite unable to flatter, he was not qualified to

meet with a high and mighty personage, seated aloft somewhere, and for that reason out of hearing of those who from below speak the truth to him." <sup>1</sup> Writing later, and referring to what he calls "the Western superciliousness," he says, "I had meant to write to *their Coryphæus* (so he sarcastically calls the Roman bishop Damasus)—not about Church affairs, save only by way of hinting that they (the Westerners) neither know the truth about us, nor take the right way to learn it, and generally that it was not right to mistake haughtiness for dignity." <sup>2</sup>

The next thing that served to extend the jurisdiction of the Roman see was an *imperial edict*—"the first of a series of what may be called State Acts" which helped to extend the power of the Bishop of Rome. When in 366 Damasus I. was raised by a majority to the Papal chair, a strong minority opposed him, and elected Ursinus. The disgraceful conflict over the election led to physical violence and much bloodshed. After a fierce fight between the two factions in a church, 137 dead bodies were carried out, whereupon a contemporary heathen historian remarks: "When I consider the splendour of Rome, I do not wonder that those who desire such rank and power should strive with all their might and impetuosity to realise their wishes; since, if they succeed, they are sure to be enriched by the presents of matrons, to be enabled, elegantly dressed, to drive abroad in their carriage, and to live in such wealth and luxury that their feasts will be more sumptuous than royal entertainments." Damasus was victorious in the contest. But in order that the clergy, who in this bitter and bloody quarrel had, by the assassination of their clerical brethren, made themselves amenable to the law, might not be at the mercy of the secular tribunals, at which often heathen officials presided, the Emperor Gratian, in a rescript in reply to the request of a Roman Council, issued in 378 an edict which added to the power and aggrandisement of the Roman bishop. Gratian was only a youth, nineteen years old at the time. By this rescript an accused bishop, or even a metropolitan who has offended, is required to repair to Rome, to be tried by such judges as the Bishop of Rome may appoint; and if Damasus himself is accused let him be exempt from ordinary civil jurisdiction, and allowed to plead before the Emperor. Here then, as it has been put, "by one stroke of his pen, the Emperor Gratian created, so far as the civil power could create, a patriarchal

Edict of  
Gratian in  
378.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 239.

jurisdiction over the whole Western Empire, and vested it in the Bishop of Rome." This does not mean, however, that that jurisdiction was acknowledged by all the Western churches themselves. Far from it. As Duchesne points out, Rome had never, until the time of Zosimus, in the fifth century, been able to exercise over the Gallic episcopate more than a feeble and intermittent interference; <sup>1</sup> nor, did the Spanish Church, as we have seen, regard Rome as having rule over it. We shall see presently the relation of the Church in Africa to the Roman bishop.

How the influence of the Roman see was extended under Damasus and Siricius.

In the time of Damasus the influence of the Roman see was extended in another way. We have seen how in the time of Cyprian the Church in Spain united with the Church in Africa in refusing submission to the jurisdiction of the Roman bishop. We have now an example of the gradual and skilful way in which the latter enlarged his authority. Himerius, Bishop of Tarragona (Aragon) in Spain wrote to Damasus, asking for counsel in some matter of Church discipline; it had reference in fact to priestly celibacy. The letter reached Rome after the death of Damasus, and after Siricius had succeeded to the chair. Siricius replied (it was in 386) reminding Himerius that he (Siricius) as occupying the chair of Peter was head of the Spanish Church, and answering his questions in an authoritative tone. This is the earliest of the genuine decretal epistles, by which in an insidious way the Roman bishops sought to extend their authority. In reply to various questions put to them by Western bishops they wrote at first in a spirit of fatherly advice, but assuming gradually a tone of apostolic authority, transforming often what had hitherto been an open question into a fixed decree. "The Roman bishops took care to regard such applications as appeals" (says Robertson); "while those who received favourable answers from Rome were eager to magnify them as authoritative judgments." <sup>2</sup>

After 395 the East severed from the West politically and ecclesiastically.

It was soon after this—namely in 395—that on the death of Theodosius, the East both geographically and politically was severed from the West, each with its own Emperor. It was inevitable that, similarly, the ecclesiastical hierarchy should resolve itself into two supreme heads—the Patriarch (or as he called himself) the Pope of Old Rome, and the Patriarch of New Rome; the one representing the Western or Latin Church, and the other the Eastern or Greek Church

<sup>1</sup> "Origines du culte Chrét.," p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the Church," Vol. I., p. 496.

—the bishop of Old Rome being conceded a sort of honorary precedence. Already the Council of Constantinople, held in 381, the second Œcumenical Council, had, in its third Canon, assigned to the Bishop of Constantinople “the precedence of honour (τὰ πρεσβεία τῆς τιμῆς) after the Bishop of Rome, *because* Constantinople was New Rome” —implying that the precedence of the Bishop of Rome was due to the fact that he was Bishop of Old Rome. As the latter put the precedence and prerogatives which he claimed on a very different basis, this canon of the Council of Constantinople was very distasteful to him. But as there were several patriarchates in the East, and only one in the West; as, moreover, the Eastern patriarchates were greatly weakened and crippled by the Monophysite controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries, and by the Mohammedan conquests; and, still further, as in the confusions consequent on the barbarian invasions, the Bishop of Rome took to a large extent the place of the civil ruler, he came ultimately to be recognised as the spiritual ruler of the West. Augustine calls Innocent I. “the ruler of the Western Church.”<sup>1</sup> That was as yet true, however, only in theory. He had strong opposition to overcome in more quarters than one before his jurisdiction was fully accepted even in the West. But we shall see how circumstances favoured his supremacy over Latin or Western Christendom.

The patriarch gets precedence after the Roman bishop as Bishop of New Rome.

How nevertheless the Bishop of Rome was recognised as ruler of the West.

Yet his claims still stoutly opposed even in the West.

The Bishops of Rome, so far, have been as a general rule, men of commonplace ability. We come now to the first occupant of the chair who was a man of considerable intellectual vigour, and who by his personal strength and influence and administrative skill was specially successful in advancing the pretensions of the Roman see—I refer to Innocent I. (402—417). I can only touch in the briefest way on some of his principal achievements. Thus, in intimating to the Metropolitan of Thessalonica his elevation to the Roman see, he took the opportunity of conferring on him, as his representative, the oversight of all the Illyrian provinces, and later installed his successor as his vicar, thus bringing those provinces within the jurisdiction of the Roman chair. In a decretal letter to a bishop of Gaul he changed the very limited right of appeal given by the Council of Sardica to condemned bishops into a positive obligation to submit all *causæ majores* to the decision of the apostolic see. From the East, Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, and Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople wrote

How the pretensions of the Roman See were advanced by Innocent I.

In the Illyrian provinces.

Again, by requiring condemned bishops to submit all *causæ majores* to him.

<sup>1</sup> “Contra Julianum,” lib. I., cap. 6.

All refer-  
ences to  
him treated  
as appeals.

Claims that  
in the whole  
Christian  
world  
nothing  
should  
be decided  
without  
him.

Perversion  
of Augus-  
tine's say-  
ing.

Zosimus,  
who suc-  
ceeded  
Innocent,  
declares  
the doc-  
trine of  
Celestius  
and Pela-  
gius to be  
sound.

But soon  
found it  
necessary  
to condemn  
both.

to obtain his influence in the controversy with regard to Origen. And the Bishop of Antioch, a synod of Palestine, and African synods sought his advice and interposition in other matters. "The Roman bishops generally—and Innocent in particular—took care to regard such questions and applications as appeals; while those who received favourable answers from Rome were eager to magnify them as authoritative judgments."<sup>1</sup> In his reply to the African synods of Milevi and Carthage with respect to the Pelagian controversy, Innocent went so far as to advance the bold claim that in the whole Christian world nothing should be decided without the cognisance of the Roman see, and that, especially in matters of faith, all bishops must turn to Peter. Innocent did what the two synods asked him to do—he condemned Pelagianism; with regard to which condemnation Augustine said: "*Jam enim de hac causa [i.e., Pelagianism] duo concilia missa sunt ad sedem apostolicam: inde etiam rescripta venerunt: causa finita est*"—words which by Roman ecclesiastics are habitually misquoted in this way—"Roma locuta—causa finita est"—a complete perversion of Augustine's meaning.

But in 417 Innocent was succeeded by Zosimus, to whom Celestius, the friend of Pelagius, submitted an evasive written statement of his views, denying original sin, but condemning certain errors imputed to him. Zosimus adjourned the case, but wrote to the African bishops describing the doctrine of Celestius as "entirely sound," and declaring that statements "so plain and open should leave no doubt in their minds." He next considered a paper of Pelagius, containing an implicit reassertion of his doctrines. Again Zosimus was misled—he was evidently a very poor theologian—and wrote to the Africans declaring that "the letter of Pelagius had most abundantly cleared him"; that he and Celestius were of "entirely sound faith," and "had never been separated from Catholic truth," but had been the victims of false accusation and hasty censure.

But Zosimus, that infallible and divinely endowed guide and teacher of the Church, soon found reason to change his mind, and was under the necessity of writing to the Africans, explaining away as plausibly as he could his approval of Celestius and Pelagius, and of sending out a circular letter absolutely condemning both.

Zosimus comes before us, too, in connection with another

<sup>1</sup> Robertson's "History of the Church," Vol. I., p. 496.

African case, which shows how little the Africans, even at this date were inclined to submit to Papal jurisdiction. Apiarius, an African presbyter, had been deposed and excommunicated by his own bishop, Urbanus of Sicca, a disciple and friend of Augustine, for various gross offences. The condemned cleric thereupon went to Rome, and laid his case before Zosimus, who restored him, and enjoined upon Urbanus his reinstatement in office. The African Council before which the matter next came, met this meddling of Zosimus by peremptorily forbidding any appeals to be carried out of Africa, and by administering a sharp rebuke to Zosimus for his officious and unworthy interference. He sought to justify his action by assigning as his authority for adjudicating certain canons of the Council of Nicæa, though what he cited as canons of Nicæa were really canons of the Council of Sardica, already spoken of. The Africans held another synod, which replied to Zosimus—not without a touch of sarcastic humour—that the decrees referred to were not in their copies of the Nicene Canons; recommending that the copies of the Canons of Nicæa should be again examined, and that the Pope should write to Alexandria, Constantinople, and Antioch to have the Greek copies there carefully consulted. They also despatched thither messengers of their own to procure correct copies. It was soon found that the alleged Nicene Canons were not in the original Greek records. Apiarius had made a profession of repentance for his misdoings and had been restored by an African Council in 419. Meanwhile Zosimus had died, had been succeeded in the Roman chair by Boniface, who soon passed away also, and was succeeded by Celestine, to whom Apiarius now once more appealed. He had in the meantime relapsed, had been again deposed, and on putting his case before Celestine was “absolved.” Another African Council was then convened at Carthage—it was in 424—before which Apiarius once more appeared, accompanied by three Papal legates, who did their best by means of obstructive tactics and bullying to prevent a verdict. At last, however, the accused presbyter, to the confusion and dismay of the legates, made a full confession of his guilt; and in a letter to Celestine the African synod took the liberty of expressing a bit of their mind. Here are some sentences from their letter: “Apiarius asked a new trial, and gross misdeeds of his were thereby brought to light. The Papal legate, Faustinus, has in the face of this, in a very rude manner

Again, a deposed African presbyter is ordered by Zosimus to be reinstated.

An African Council rebuked Zosimus for interfering, and forbade appeals to Rome.

Zosimus quotes certain canons of Sardica as canons of Nicæa, eliciting the sarcasm of the Africans.

Later, another Roman bishop, Celestine absolved Apiarius,

who, however, confessed his guilt, and the African Council give a bit of its mind to Celestine.

Declaring that the assumption of appeal to Rome is a trespass on the rights of the African Church.

demanding the reception of this man into the fellowship of the Africans, because he has appealed to the Pope, and has been received into fellowship by him. But this very thing ought not to have been done. At last has Apiarius himself acknowledged all his crimes. The Pope may hereafter no longer so readily give audience to those who (like Apiarius) go from Africa to Rome, nor receive the excommunicated into Church communion, be they bishops or priests, as the Council of Nicæa (Canon 5) has ordained, in whose direction bishops are included. *The assumption of appeal to Rome is a trespass on the rights of the African Church*; and what has been brought forward as a Nicene ordinance is not Nicene, and is not to be found in the genuine copies of the Nicene Acts, which have been received from Constantinople and Alexandria. Let the Pope, therefore, in future send no more judges to Africa, and since Apiarius has now been excluded for his offences, the Pope will not expect the African Church to submit any longer to the annoyances of the legate Faustinus. May God the Lord long preserve the Pope, and may the Pope pray for the Africans ! ”

They also very politely ask that the Pope will not send any more agents or nuncios to interfere with them in any business *for fear the Church should suffer through pride and ambition*, and they politely hint that they have had as much both of Celestine and his legate as they have any stomach for. This letter could not have been very pleasant reading for his holiness ! The truth is that the action of the Popes in the whole of this affair was exceedingly discreditable. It illustrates the unscrupulous tactics they were ready to resort to in order to compass their ambitious ends. It is hard to believe that three successive Popes—Zosimus, Boniface, and Celestine—could have been so grossly ignorant as not to know that the canons which they quoted as Nicene were really canons of Sardica, which carried no general authority.

The African Church maintained its independence till crushed by the Vandals.

The African Church continued to maintain a similar spirit of independence till they were crushed and broken by the Vandal invasions and atrocities. In a Council at Hippo Regius in 393 the North African bishops protested against such titles as *princeps sacerdotum*, *summus sacerdos*, being assumed by the Bishop of Rome.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE PAPAL POWER ACCELERATED UNDER LEO THE GREAT, GREGORY THE GREAT, AND THE GREAT EMPEROR CHARLEMAGNE

#### *Section I.—Leo the Great (440—461)*

THE occupants of the Roman chair with whom we have had to do so far have been as a rule (with the exception of Innocent) men of little mark personally, of very average ability, with a large measure of hierarchical ambition, but made and moulded by the age, not making it. The history of the growth of the Papal power is of course in some measure a history of the peculiar circumstances of the time, and of the political events and movements which favoured it. But from this time forward it is in a very large and exceptional degree a history of the great men who held the pontificate, and whose powerful personalities not only added immense energy, influence and *éclat* to their proceedings, but impart an intense and even thrilling interest to the history of the time, and to the events and great transactions in which they were concerned. It is true that the great, strong men who filled the Papal chair were few and far between and that the vast majority were in themselves obscure and insignificant. In this attempt to sketch the evolution of the Papacy, we may, therefore, safely, with much comfort and satisfaction to ourselves and no real loss to our appreciation of the history, pass by most of them, and in what remains confine our notice mainly to the greater personalities, who were also the chief agents in advancing the power, prestige, and prerogatives of the Popedom.

The history of the growth of the Papal power is henceforward largely a history of the great men who held the pontificate.

Now the first really great man who filled the chair, and extended its influence and sway far beyond any point yet reached, who (as some one has put it) marks an epoch in the development of the Papacy similar to that which Cyprian marks in the development of the episcopate, the first Bishop of Rome who in a sense is properly called Pope is Leo I., who is more fittingly designated "the Great"

The first really great man who filled the chair, the first indeed who is properly called Pope, is Leo I.



It was a time of difficulty and peril when law and order were giving way under the barbarian invasions.

Leo the one great strong man of his time.

than most of those to whom that title has been given. He has been described as "properly the founder of the Roman Papacy as a universal episcopate, with the full sanction of the civil power." It was a time of unparalleled difficulty and peril, when the very foundations of law and order were giving way under the irresistible barbarian invasions. But Leo stands out above all his contemporaries, both lay and ecclesiastical, in the whole Empire, as the one great, strong man of the time—a typical Roman ruler in the strength and energy of his will, in the proud dignity of his bearing, and in the high order of administrative capacity which he displayed. Stern and pitiless destroyers, like Attila the Hun and Genseric the Vandal, were awed and cowed by his visit to their camp, with only two companions, and nothing but a crozier in his hand. "All that survived of Rome, of her unbounded ambition, her inflexible perseverance, her dignity in defeat, her haughtiness of language, her belief in her own eternity and in her indefeasible title to universal dominion, her respect for traditionary and written law and unchangeable custom, might seem concentrated in him alone" (Milman).

Had been already sent on important embassies.

Elected to the Papedom in his absence.

We have no details with respect to his earlier years. It is known, however, that he had already won distinction under his predecessors, Celestine and Sixtus III. On several important embassies, though a very young man, he had acquitted himself with ability and judgment. At the time of his predecessor's death Leo was absent from the capital on a special mission to Gaul with a view to effect a reconciliation between the great rival generals, Ætius and Albinus, whose quarrel was fraught with danger to the Empire—a proof of the estimation in which his capacity was held in the higher ruling circles. Yet in his absence Leo was elected to the vacant pontificate by the unanimous and enthusiastic voice of clergy, senate, and people. Though long afterwards he confessed the fear and trembling with which he assumed the office, he was too great a man, too conscious of the divine gift of commanding intellect and genius, to go through the form of the *nolo episcopari*. He accepted the responsibility, he said, in the assurance that He who laid the burden on him would enable him to bear it.

The first Pope conspicuous as a preacher.

Leo was the first of the Popes who was conspicuous as a preacher. The Bishops of Constantinople, many of them at least, were famed for their pulpit gifts. The historian Sozomen informs us that at Rome neither the bishop nor

any one else was accustomed to preach in the church. Indeed, Leo's own sermons, still extant, are so brief and simple, so destitute of the marks of pulpit eloquence, as to suggest that the art had been little cultivated. But he saw the power that resides in this instrument, the opportunity it affords of instructing and moving men, and was determined to employ it, and to encourage his clergy to do the same.

It was chiefly, however, as a ruler and administrator that he was eminent, and he entered on the work with a very soaring and lofty idea of the Papal office. It was, as I have said already, under Celestine, and largely through the agency of Leo, who was then his archdeacon, that at the Council of Ephesus in 431 the Primacy of the Roman see as a universal episcopate was formally and deliberately based on express divine institution, as expressed in Matt. xvi. 18, 19, and the theory fully elaborated. That idea, thus finally formulated, took flesh and blood in Leo. To embody it in fact, to put it into operation everywhere—in the East as in the West—was the master passion of his life. The capital of the world-Empire was, he insisted, prepared by Divine Providence to be the centre of the kingdom of God. Rome, which had been the fount and home of error and superstition, was transformed by Peter, its first bishop and Primate, into the metropolis of the Christian world, and invested by God Himself with a rule larger and wider than even her former world-Empire had been. The Roman bishop, is therefore, *primus omnium episcoporum*; he alone inherits the *plenitudo potestatis*, the *solicitudo omnium pastorum et communis cura universalis ecclesiæ*. Such is Leo's teaching in his letters and sermons. Nothing could be more remote from or more diametrically opposed to the spirit of Peter than the arrogance of Leo. Peter submits meekly to the rebuke of Paul; Leo declares resistance to his authority to arise from impious pride and to be the sure way to hell. Peter warns pastors, his fellow elders, against hierarchical assumption, exhorting them to feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof not as lords over God's heritage, but as being ensamples to the flock; Leo cannot put his lordship and authority too high. Obedience to him, the Pope, is necessary to salvation. Whosoever, he says, is not with the apostolic see, that is, with the head of the body, whence all gifts of grace descend to the body, is not in the body of the Church, and has no part in her grace. Such was Leo's own idea of his prerogative, which

Chiefly eminent, however, as a ruler and administrator.

Largely through his agency the Roman see at Council of Ephesus founded as a universal episcopate, and the idea took flesh and blood in Leo.

What his conception of it was.

Contrasted with St. Peter.

he set himself with all the might of an iron will, and all the art of a consummate diplomacy, to realise in actual fact.

The circumstances of the time favourable to his purpose.

And the circumstances of the time were favourable to his purpose. The East was torn, divided and embittered by controversy, distracted and helpless in the hands of feeble rulers both in Church and State. The West was no better off so far as its civil government was concerned. Africa was laid waste and prostrate by the Vandal conquests. Everywhere chaos and confusion, terror and despair from the barbarian invasions—a seething sea of trouble, and no strong and skilful pilot to guide the ship of either State or Church but this one man, who, peering into storm and mist, grasps the helm with clear eye and firm hand and purpose, and with no doubt or misgiving about the course which he ought to steer.

The African Church submits to his authority.

We have seen how bravely and with what spirit and vigour the African Church resisted the arrogant pretensions of the Roman bishops Innocent, Zosimus, and Celestine to dictate to it. But now under the devastations of the Vandals, who were Arians, the Church in Africa was utterly crushed, its spirit broken, and its bishops glad and thankful to obtain the support of Rome at any cost, even the cost of submitting without protest to the authority of Leo.

Recovers and extends his supremacy in East Illyria,

In East Illyria he recovered the supremacy which was in danger of being lost, extending the jurisdiction of Anastasius, the Metropolitan of Thessalonica, as Papal vicar over all the Illyrian bishops, but carefully reserving a right of appeal to the Pope, which he based on the supremacy inherent in him as successor of Peter. This province, too, submitted to his jurisdiction.

and in Spain.

In Spain, too, Leo asserted his authority. The year before his accession the Church in Spain renounced Arianism, and announced her return to the Roman unity. Some sort of Gnostic-Manichæan heresy, known as Priscillianism because disseminated by Priscillian, became rife there, but the persecution of its adherents only seemed to extend it. On Leo's recommendation the heretics were condemned by two Councils, and a rule of faith prescribed, drawn up on the basis of an exposition by Leo.

The custom of granting the Pall now begins.

Now, too, began a custom which still continues, and serves to keep the hierarchy in subordination to and dependence on the Pope—the grant of the Pall or Pallium—a white scarf of lamb's wool worn on the shoulders, with four purple crosses worked on it, sent by the Pope to arch-

bishops and primates, as a sign and symbol of metropolitan authority, and that they share in the plenitude of the episcopal office.

Leo's attempt to assert his authority in Gaul was less successful than elsewhere. He there met with a stout and determined opponent in the person of Hilary, Metropolitan Bishop of Arles. Hilary had deposed Celidonius, Bishop of Besançon because he had married a widow before his ordination, and had in violation of ecclesiastical law presided as judge at a criminal trial, and pronounced sentence of death. Besançon belonged to the province of Vienne, so that Hilary's interference seemed an encroachment on the rights of the Bishop of Vienne. Hilary's plea was that the Bishop of Arles had been made Papal vicar in Gaul, and invested with metropolitan rights in Vienne, except in the case of what men called *causæ majores*. Celidonius appealed to Leo. But Hilary crossed the Alps and appeared in his presence, not to plead humbly before him, but to protest against his infringing the customs of the Gallic Church. Leo reinstated Celidonius; but Hilary in haughty language defied the Pope, and continued to assert his own rights in the matter. Leo cut him off from communion with the Roman Church, deprived him of all authority in the province of Vienne, and accused him of insubordination to the Primacy of Peter, adding that "whoso disputes the Primacy of the apostle Peter can in no way lessen the apostle's dignity, but puffed up by the spirit of his own pride he destroys himself in hell." As a matter of fact Hilary was not disturbed in his bishopric, but continued to fulfil the duties of it. But Leo procured an edict from Valentinian III., the weak Emperor of the West, affirming that "the whole world acknowledges the supremacy of the Roman see, that neither Hilary nor any other bishop was at liberty to oppose its will, or do any thing without the sanction of the Pope of the Eternal City, and all its decrees have the force of law." Yet both Hilary and his successors continued to maintain their rights with the approval of subsequent Popes. Hilary died much esteemed without, it would seem, being reconciled to Rome. Yet he appears along with Leo as a saint in the Roman calendars. Probably there were faults on both sides. Hilary was an able man, high-minded, perhaps somewhat proud, and could ill brook interference with what he regarded as his just rights. Leo, to say the least, was an equally able man; possibly by nature and certainly from official position, still

Not so successful in maintaining his authority in Gaul: Hilary's persistent opposition.

But Leo procures an edict from Valentinian III. that the whole world acknowledges the supremacy of the Roman see.

more arrogant and despotic. It was in the nature of things that two such wills could not come into collision without causing wounds and bruises on both sides. Leo's treatment of Hilary was virtually condemned by the action of his successors.

Leo was an expert theologian.

Leo was one of the few Popes who was an accomplished expert in theology, and his theological acumen enabled him to make the acrimonious controversies now raging in the East subservient to the increase of his power and influence. Eutyches, for carrying the deification of Christ's humanity so far as to affirm that after his incarnation He had only one nature, the divine, was deposed and excommunicated by a synod at Constantinople, over which the Patriarch Flavian presided and joined in the condemnation of Eutyches. The latter laid his case before Leo, and appealed to an Œcumenical Council. Flavian also put his version of the case before the Roman bishop. Leo agreed with Flavian, in a long letter to whom he expounded with great clearness and acumen the doctrine now familiar to us as that of the two natures in one person. But the Emperor, Theodosius, who sided with Eutyches, convened a Council at Ephesus (449) at which Dioscurus, the truculent Bishop of Alexandria, a partisan of Eutyches, presided. Eutyches was cleared, the doctrine of the two natures rejected, and Leo's letter treated with contempt.

In a famous letter he expounds the doctrine of two natures in one person rejected by a Council at Ephesus.

Female influence at work.

But he who penetrates to the hidden, secret springs on which the external movements of history, even of ecclesiastical history, depend will often find not far off the deft and bewitching hand of woman. It was so in this instance. Which of the two sides should prove the victor in this grave theological controversy depended in no small degree on female influence, and on which of two women should prove the stronger, the beautiful Eudocia, the Empress, or the Emperor's sister, Pulcheria.

That stern and potent arbitrator, Death, decided in favour of the latter. The Emperor Theodosius died, and Pulcheria, the warm friend of Flavian and Leo, ascended the throne, uniting with herself as husband and nominal Emperor a general named Marcianus. Under the auspices of Pulcheria a new Œcumenical Council was immediately called, the famous Council of Chalcedon, which met in 451.

Through Pulcheria a new Council called at Chalcedon which accepts Leo's letter as the basis of its decision.

How the letter written by Leo to Flavian on the Eutychian controversy at the time of the previous synod was read at Chalcedon, greeted with acclamations of warm

approval, and made the basis of a formal definition of the orthodox doctrine of the two natures of Christ in one person, "acknowledged as Christ, Son, Lord, in two natures without confusion, without mutation, without division, without separation," belongs to the general history, and need not here be stated in detail. Dioscurus, the violent Metropolitan of Alexandria, who presided at the previous Council, was deposed from his episcopal dignity, and excluded from all Christian rights and privileges. And it need not be added that the unanimous acceptance of the definition of Leo as the standard of orthodoxy on the Person of our Lord, and the immense influence which through his legates he exercised on that great Council, helped exceedingly to exalt the authority of Leo as Pope in the esteem of all Christendom.

But now came what Leo dreaded from the first, and the fear of which led him very reluctantly to give his sanction to the meeting of the Council at Chalcedon—a deliverance by the Council on the relative ranks of the Bishop of Rome and the Bishop of Constantinople. It was little more than an extended repetition of the third canon of the Council of Constantinople of 381 (already mentioned), which assigned "the precedence of honour" (*τὰ πρεσβεία τῆς τιμῆς*) "after the Bishop of Rome to the Patriarch of Constantinople, because Constantinople was New Rome." The decree of Constantinople having been read at Chalcedon the Council voted: "We recognise the canon just read, and do ourselves adopt the same decision with regard to the precedence of the most holy Church of Constantinople—New Rome,—for the fathers naturally assigned precedence to the see of the elder Rome because that city was imperial, and, taking the same point of view, the one hundred and fifty pious bishops awarded the same precedence to the most holy see of New Rome, judging with good reason that the city which was honoured with the sovereignty and the senate, and which enjoyed the same precedence with the elder imperial Rome, should also in matters ecclesiastical be dignified like her as being second after her."

When this was proposed the Roman legates pleaded that they had no instructions on this subject, and so withdrew from the Council, so that the canon was passed in their absence. Next day they solemnly protested against its adoption, and insisted on its being rescinded, but this was refused. When Leo learned of the canon he indignantly repudiated it because the precedence allowed to the Roman

But Chalcedon accepts the Canon of Constantinople giving precedence of honour to the patriarch "after the Bishop of Rome" because the patriarch was "Bishop of New Rome."

Why Leo repudiated it.

bishop is given him, not because he occupies the chair of Peter, but simply as bishop of the imperial city ; and he threatened to excommunicate the whole Church at Constantinople. He described the elevation of the patriarch to the position assigned him as a work of pride (humble man that he was) ; and spurned the suggestion that the place and authority of the Roman see were due to political considerations, rather than from Divine institution, and the Primacy of Peter. He admonished the patriarch to lower his ambition, and administered to him the advice : *Tene quod habes, ne alius accipiat coronam tuam.* The decree remained, however, and was afterwards confirmed by Justinian I., and renewed by the Trullan Council. While not formally acknowledged by the Latin Church, its validity has always been maintained in the East.

Yet the Bishop of Rome continued to rise in authority and influence.

In spite of it, however, the Bishop of Rome continued to rise in authority and influence. As the great outstanding, independent potentate of the West his power was steadily increasing and extending ; while the patriarch languished under the shadow of the Emperor, content to be the mere tool of Imperial power. And while Leo indignantly repudiated the idea that his authority was due to political considerations, he took good care to turn to account the historical and political prestige of the Eternal City. He pointed out that Rome, the ancient metropolis of the Empire, was by express Divine guidance chosen for the chair of the chief of the apostles, and the seat of the Primacy ; and he confidently predicted that the conquests and Empire of ecclesiastical Rome would surpass in extent and splendour the utmost bounds that her civil dominion had achieved.

How Leo bore himself in the invasion of Attila the Hun ;

How Leo bore himself amid the demoralisation and despair produced by the terrible invasion of Attila and his Huns has been already suggested. When the weak Emperor Valentinian III. forsook Ravenna, and was supposed to contemplate abdication and flight, Leo remained to face and grapple with the peril ; and when Rome herself, left undefended, was threatened by this " scourge of God," Leo met him on a peaceful embassy by the shores of Benacus on the frontiers of Italy, dissuaded him from his purpose, and saved Rome and Italy from ruin. His interview with Attila has been immortalised by the pencil of Raffaele, who, however, as Milman points out, has really lowered the moral grandeur of the interview by introducing supernatural apparitions. When, some

three years later, the Arian Vandal Genseric, who, very little less fierce, cruel, and barbarous than Attila, had overrun and devastated north Africa, landed at the mouth of the Tiber, and advanced upon Rome, which lay disorganised and defenceless before him, Leo once more stood in the breach, and, although he was not able to prevent the sack and pillage of the city, obtained large concessions from him. His powerful intercession put a strong restraint upon the rapacity and cruelty of the spoilers, and the suffering that ensued was greatly mitigated and relieved by his self-denying efforts.

and of  
Genseric the  
Vandal.

Leo died in 461, leaving Rome and Italy indeed in a state of political anarchy, but after having raised the Popedom to a height, and covered it with a glory, never before attained.

### *Section 2.—Gregory the Great (590—604)*

In the accession of Gregory to the Pontificate we arrive at another milestone in the history of the evolution of the Papacy. Gregory has been styled "the greatest, the noblest, the most pious, and the most superstitious in the whole series of Popes." To call him "the greatest" is without doubt a great exaggeration. He was certainly surpassed in genius and intellectual power by Leo, Hildebrand, and Innocent III. In view of his exceptional piety, goodness, and benevolence from the Roman standpoint of ascetic virtue, of his indomitable strength of will, the work he did, and the mark he has made in history, he may fairly be called, as he has been, "great."

He was born at Rome about 540 of an old Roman family of senatorial rank and great wealth. Intended for office in the civil government, he was educated with a view to that, becoming familiar with Latin literature, but not with Greek. He was not much over thirty years old when he was appointed to the highest civil office in Rome, that of imperial prefect; but soon after this he bade adieu to secular pursuits, turned his father's house into a convent, and devoted the immense wealth he had inherited from his father to religious objects. He founded and endowed six monasteries in Sicily, and gave his remaining wealth for the benefit of the poor. In the convent which he entered, instead of stepping as he might have done into the place of abbot, he began with the lowest offices, giving his whole time to works of devotion and self-improvement. When

Gregory, the scion of an old Roman family of great wealth, was trained for civil office, but soon turned his father's house into a monastery.



When he became abbot an incident reveals his rigorous, even cruel, discipline.

by and by he rose to the position of abbot he exacted from others the same rigid discipline he had imposed upon himself. An incident related by himself illustrates the relentless and even cruel rigour of his rule. One of his monks, called Justus, who, prior to his becoming a monk, had practised medicine, had attended Gregory in a long and severe illness with unsleeping vigilance and care. Soon after this, Justus lay upon his death bed, and told a brother monk of three pieces of gold which he possessed, concealed in some medicine. This was of course a violation of the monastic rule of the community of property. To mark his displeasure, and convey to him a sense of his sin, Gregory forbade any of the brethren to go near the cell of the dying man. Only the brother to whom he had made the communication was permitted to speak to him in order to inform him how much he was abhorred by his brethren. No word of comfort was allowed to be spoken to him. When he died, without a voice to cheer him, or a hand to soothe his suffering, his dead body was thrown out upon the dunghill, with the pieces of gold he had preserved, while the monks cried out, "Thy money perish with thee!" There is much to show that Gregory was naturally kind, and not a monster of cruelty. The incident serves to show how an unnatural and inhuman system, with its rigid asceticisms, tends to transform human beings into hard and unpitiful savages.

Continued to be employed in public business.

On account of his great capacity for practical affairs, Gregory, long after his devotion to a monastic life, was frequently employed in important public business, and commanded universal esteem and confidence. He spent six years as Papal nuncio or ambassador at Constantinople.

Seeing some Anglo-Saxon youths in the slave market at Rome he resolves on a mission to England.

He was still in the condition of a monk when an event occurred which led to a momentous resolve on his part that profoundly affected the future of England. The story is familiar to every reader of English history. One day on seeing some fair-haired Anglo-Saxon youths exposed for sale in the slave market at Rome, his interest was awakened in them, and in the country from which they came, and the idea of a mission to England for the conversion of their fellow countrymen took possession of him. He at once repaired to the Pope, urged him to send a mission on this great enterprise, volunteered himself to conduct it, and had actually started on the journey, when the Romans, becoming aware of his departure, refused to part with him, and compelled the Pope to bring him back again.

Wished to go himself but was not permitted.

Though forced for the present to abandon his great purpose he did not lose sight of it. Soon after his elevation to the Papal chair he sent the Benedictine monk Augustine, with forty others, on the momentous mission to that country. We shall hear of it again.

Gregory, like Leo, was called to the Papal throne by the unanimous and urgent voice of clergy, senate, and people. It was with great reluctance that he consented to listen to the call. He wrote to the Emperor entreating him to withhold his sanction, but the letter was intercepted by his friends. He was trying, it is said, to escape from the city when he was seized, carried to the Church of St. Peter, and, whether he would or no, set apart to the high office. Nor did he ever cease to look back on the quietude of the convent life in a wistful and regretful spirit. As he led a tranquil life in his monastery, he said, he was like one sailing with a gentle but prospering breeze, when suddenly there came a tempest which bore him onward with irresistible force.

*Called to the Papal chair by clergy, senate and people, and yields unwillingly.*

To the Papal throne he brought all the austerity, all the superstition and devotion of the monastic temper; but he brought also the firmness of an inflexible will, the boundless energy of a strong nature that never seemed to flag with the varied and multitudinous affairs that required his notice; and with all his sternness of outward aspect he brought a kindness of disposition, an unbounded charity to the poor and the oppressed, and a humility of spirit which, combined with the assurance that as successor of Peter and vicar of Christ his spiritual rule was supreme, seemed incredible.

*The sort of man he was.*

It was almost beyond comparison a difficult and evil time, convulsed with the birth throes of a new era in the world's history, when, turn to whatever quarter he might, the prospect was black and threatening. Dark indeed the night was, and the ship labouring heavily, when Gregory assumed command. The whole West was threatened with anarchy and chaos; and Italy itself with ruin and desolation. The Ostrogothic rule had been overthrown by Narses, the general of Justinian, and the Byzantine government again revived in Italy, and an exarchate to represent the Emperor established at Ravenna. But now the country was overrun by half-Arian, half-heathen tribes called Lombards from the plains of the Danube, the most savage and ferocious of the Teutonic barbarians. Their first visit was made in 569 under Alboin, whose character may be

*It was a difficult and evil time; the night dark, and the ship labouring.*

*The state of affairs.*

inferred from this incident related of him: that at a great public banquet he pledged the health of his Queen Rosmunda in a cup made out of her father's skull. On their first invasion they took possession of Northern Italy, to which they gave the name of Lombardy. Under Alboin's successors their conquests were extended farther south till almost the whole of Italy was seized by them, their ravages carried to the very gates of Rome, and the capital itself besieged. Gregory himself relates how the Italian cities were destroyed, the churches pillaged and burned, the monasteries robbed, the clergy massacred, the country depopulated, the fields left uncultivated, the towns that remained almost without inhabitant, and the sparse population still left harried without cessation. War, fire, tempest, inundations of the Tiber that swept away the granaries of corn, and their inevitable concomitants—plague, pestilence, and famine—had been raging for some twenty years.

No fit  
leader any-  
where.

Gregory  
called to  
both civil  
and ecclesi-  
astical rule.

How he  
acquitted  
himself.

Whither in these circumstances were the people to turn in their distress? The Exarch of Ravenna, who represented the Empire, was not only weak and helpless, but by his folly provoked invasion. The Emperor at Constantinople was assailed with earnest petitions for assistance, but he also was too feeble and too much beset by troubles of his own to give it. There was nothing for it but that Gregory, the one capable man who emerged out of the chaos, should assume the functions both of the civil and the ecclesiastical ruler. This he was compelled to do. The epitaph afterwards inscribed upon his tomb described him as having ruled as "God's Consul." The wide territories and great wealth which as Pope he owned in Italy, the so-called patrimony of Peter, supplied him with large resources, which enabled him to save the people from the horrors of famine. These estates of the Church gave him, too, the position of a secular prince, far more powerful than the Exarch, so that the Lombards in fact treated with him as with an independent sovereign. He procured the withdrawal of the Lombards from Rome by a large gift drawn from the treasures of the Church; and through Theodelinda, the orthodox Lombard Queen, he was the means of winning not only the King but the whole Lombard people to the orthodox faith, and of establishing peace and order in the country.

The evi-  
dence of his  
letters.

Letters still extant show with what unwearied vigilance, justice, and humanity Gregory administered the large

estates possessed by the Church in Italy and beyond it, and how careful he was to protect the peasants who lived on them from undue exaction or oppression. It was from this source, as we have seen, that he gave relief to the famishing population. On the first day of every month, corn, wine, cheese, meat, fish, vegetables, etc., were dispensed to the poor. He required that the hungry waiting at his door should be fed before he sat down at table himself.

And yet his duties as chief pastor of the West were discharged with as much scrupulous care as if no other burden rested on him. His discipline was vigilant and considerate, but firm and even severe. Unworthy bishops and priests were deposed; and those guilty of lesser offences rebuked and warned. Monastic institutions especially were cherished and encouraged. He not only surrounded himself with monks as his entourage, and employed them as his chief executive, but made them bishops, legates, and missionaries.

Yet his duties as chief pastor most faithfully discharged.

But the chief event of his Pontificate, that on which he most prided himself, was the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, through the mission of the monk Augustine and his companions. In one letter he recounts with triumph the addition of ten thousand converts in England. And the policy recommended by Gregory in dealing with those fresh from heathenism is exceedingly suggestive. He gave orders that their idols should be demolished, but that the pagan temples should be consecrated and transformed into Christian churches. He even laid down the principle that not only heathen temples, but pagan forms of worship, might be profitably preserved, and modified to Christian uses. Even the sacrifices of oxen might continue, only they were to be offered on saint days. It is impossible, he said, for rude minds to tear themselves away from everything at once; for he who attempts to ascend a high elevation does so by grades or steps, not by leaps and bounds (*gradibus vel passibus, non autem saltibus*)—a rather perilous principle; for while it secured for early missions a much greater immediate and external success than otherwise would have been possible, the success was outward and apparent only: the external profession of Christianity in England was followed by a wholesale relapse to heathenism again; while the Roman faith was leavened by corrupt pagan superstitions which continue to this day. It thus happened that pagan religions as well as pagan converts were baptised.

The mission of the monk Augustine and his companions to England.

The remarkable policy prescribed by Gregory.

And its result.

He made the ritual of worship more ornate.

Gregory was at pains also to improve the ritual of worship. He seems to have had a special taste for the ceremonial in religion. What he meant by improvement of the public worship was making it more ornate and gorgeous. On high festivals he went in great state, attended by officials, and mostly on horseback, from his palace in the Lateran to St. Peter's. Magnificently robed, he was with much ceremony led to the choir, with the seven candlesticks and incense borne before him. He usually preached himself on these occasions, for like Leo he recognised the value of this divine ordinance, laid it as a duty on his clergy, and gave some good advice how best to fulfil it. They should preach by their lives, he told them, as well as by their words. "He who by his position is required to speak the highest things is compelled by the same necessity to *exemplify* the highest." We are reminded of Milton's maxim that "he who hoped to write well in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem." He took steps also to improve *the music* of the Church, and introduced a new mode of chanting, which has been called after him *Cantus Gregorianus*. He organised a school of singers, and was himself their chief instructor. And the art of sacred song thus promoted by him was used as a means of winning and attracting the heathen. Augustine and his fellow missionaries to England were accompanied by a band of singers specially trained and prepared at Rome.

Preached himself, like Leo; his advice to preachers.

He improved the music also.

Yet he was a most voluminous writer.

And yet, though all these multifarious interests had the benefit of his minute and vigilant attention, Gregory was the most voluminous and popular writer of his age. The Roman authorities have ranked him, along with Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, as one of the four great teachers of the Church (*doctores ecclesiæ*). He is lacking, it is true, in the scholarship of Jerome, and in the originality and depth of Augustine. What he did was to gather up and summarise what his predecessors had taught in forms which made it more accessible. His *Pastoral Rule* was all through the Middle Ages in wider circulation probably than the canonical books themselves. His *Books of Dialogues* on the lives and miracles of Benedict of Nursia and other saints, abound in the most grotesque and extraordinary prodigies, and exhibit a credulity almost inconceivable. His largest work is his *Magna Moralia* or *Exposition of the Book of Job*. He gives in each case the literal, the allegorical, and the moral meaning. Indeed, on his method "there is no meaning that might not be found in any book

His *Magna Moralia* characterised.

ever written, no word which is not pregnant with unutterable mysteries, no syllable which may not mean anything" (Milman). Job represents Christ; Job's wife the carnal nature; his seven sons the twelve apostles, and hence the clergy; his three daughters the faithful laity; Job's friends are the heretics; the 7,000 sheep the perfect Christians; the 3,000 camels the heathen and Samaritans; the 500 yoke of oxen and 500 she-asses without doubt denote the heathen because Isaiah says, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

By all this restless energy and manifold activity, animated by a vigorous mind and intense earnestness and devotion, Gregory could not fail to raise the Papacy to a still greater height in public estimation, and extend its influence. Nor did he in the least abate the claim of universal primacy put forward by Leo. "With respect to the Church of Constantinople," he said, "who doubts that it is subject to the apostolic see?" Again, "I know not what bishop is not subject to it, if fault is found in him." When he learned that John the Faster, the Patriarch of Constantinople, had assumed the title of "œcumenical" or "universal bishop" he was deeply indignant, and did his utmost to have the title revoked. He branded it as a "proud, profane, pestiferous, blasphemous and diabolical usurpation," and compared the patriarch who had the audacity to assume it to Lucifer and Antichrist.

By all this energy he raised the Papacy to a great height.

But we cannot close the history of Gregory without some reference to one deep stain that rests on his reputation. Maurice, the Emperor at Constantinople, treated Gregory with coldness, and not only declined to prohibit, but gave his emphatic approval to the patriarch's assumption of the title of "universal bishop." An insurrection was headed by a soldier called Phocas, who is described as having been exceptionally mean and cruel in character, as well as repulsive and hideous in person. He is said to have been a drunkard, lewd, sanguinary, and savage in speech, as well as pitiless and brutal. Maurice, who had been a just and high-minded ruler, took shelter in a church when the insurrection broke out. By the order of Phocas he was dragged forth from his place of refuge. His five sons were butchered before his eyes, and his wife and daughters slaughtered by this demon in human form; then the Emperor himself was beheaded; and the blood-stained butcher ascended the throne. Immediately on the news of

A deep stain on his reputation.

the butchery and usurpation of Phocas reaching Rome, Gregory wrote to the usurper in terms of the most fulsome adulation. In language of nauseous extravagance, he lauds the benignity of the iniquitous and atrocious usurper, calls on heaven and earth to exult and be glad at his accession ; represents the angelic choirs of heaven, and all earthly tongues as breaking forth in hymns and jubilees of thanksgiving ! Not too strong is the characterisation of Gibbon when he says that " the joyful applause with which Gregory salutes the fortune of the assassin has sullied with indelible disgrace the character of the saint."

His character seems a medley of contradictions.

But in truth Gregory's character was a strange medley of contradictions. At one time he appears enlightened, intelligent, and practical ; at another a narrow-minded monk, the victim of boundless credulity and superstition. Now he seems simple, childlike and guileless to a fault ; again a subtle, wily, and astute diplomatist. He can be firm and fearless in his attitude to princes, and yet abject and shameless in his sycophancy. His health was delicate, he was seldom free from illness, he said that to live was pain ; and yet his energy was inexhaustible, his activity incessant, and the work accomplished by him almost incredible. He is said to have been personally most humble ; yet was he most arrogant in his claims to universal supremacy. He had acquired a name for benevolence and pity, and yet he could be stern and pitiless to cruelty ; and his callous exultation over the assassination of Maurice and the usurpation of his murderer is simply lamentable. In this case he gained what was doubtless the chief object of his flattery. Phocas was duly grateful. Gregory died in 604, but Phocas, at the request of Gregory's successor, forbade the patriarch to assume the title of " universal bishop," while he acknowledged the Papal chair at Rome to be " the head of all churches " (*caput omnium ecclesiarum*).

For 250 years after Gregory no Pope of notable eminence filled the chair.

Gregory died in the year 604. For the next two centuries and a half not a single Pope of any prominence personally, or any notable ability, filled the Roman chair. It is remarkable that for two hundred and fifty years none but men who were in themselves obscure and commonplace, often of contemptible capacity, secured promotion to such exalted official eminence. Any interest which any of them possess during this long period is derived not from anything in themselves, but from the movements with which they happened to be connected. We shall therefore with great advantage to ourselves and no serious loss lose

sight of them, and leave them undisturbed (as we did another large batch) in their well-earned obscurity.

*Section 3.—Charlemagne: The Frankish Stimulant to the Evolution*

In the period between the death of Leo in 461 and the accession of Gregory I. in 590 some twenty Popes succeeded one another, but scarcely one of them is worth spending a sentence on. It would be a prostitution of the high purpose of history to encumber it even with their names.

Yet in this period a series of events began which quickened and stimulated the evolution, and contributed most materially to enhance the consideration of the Roman bishop and the Latin Church. The conversion of the Franks under Clovis (Chlôdvig, Ludvig, Louis), due to the influence of his wife Clotilde, a Catholic princess, brought a most important and permanent accession to the ranks of that church, and served to expand and evolve it in many ways. Its immense importance is traceable to two causes. (1) The Franks were the only one of the great Teutonic races which adopted Christianity in its "Catholic" form. The others—the West Goths, the East Goths, the Burgundians, the Suevi, the Vandals, the Lombards—had accepted Christianity in the Arian form, of it, and it was they or some of them who constituted the earliest Teutonic kingdoms. But observe (2) it was the Frankish race that was to become predominant over all the others. Already in 486, before he became a Christian, Clovis defeated the Roman patrician Syagrius in a pitched battle, and crushed Latin, that is, Roman, opposition in the northern parts of Gaul. Then in 496 he won the famous battle of Tolbiac, and established his rule over the Alemanni of the Upper Rhine. This was the occasion when he and a large proportion of his army were baptised as "Catholic" Christians. He overcame the Burgundians also, turned against the Visigoths, already an organised kingdom, and drove them out of Aquitaine into Spain. One day, referring to the Visigoths, he said: "I am grieved to see these Arians occupying a part of Gaul. With the help of God let us march, and take possession of their country." <sup>1</sup> They marched accordingly, and took possession. Before his death, Clovis was recognised everywhere as master of Gaul, and before long Gaul generally had become "Catholic"; and it thus came to pass that not

Conversion  
of the  
Franks: its  
importance.

(1) They  
only of the  
Teutons  
adopted  
"Catholic"  
Christianity.

(2) They  
became  
predomi-  
nant.

Clovis be-  
came master  
of Gaul,  
which thus  
became  
"Catholic."

<sup>1</sup> "Historia Francorum," II., 36.



the Arian, but the orthodox form of Christianity should be the religion of Gaul, of the West as a whole, and of most of Europe.

Too true it is indeed that both Church and Society in Gaul, under the successors of Clovis, became sadly degenerate. This was specially true of the royal family. "The history of the Frank kings (in Gregory of Tours) is a sickening story of lawless and unbridled self-indulgence, of domestic hatreds, treachery, and cruelty. Brother was ever ready to assail and conspire against brother, to take him at advantage, to exterminate his children. Their attempts at enlarging their domains at one another's expense were usually as feeble and stupid as they were unscrupulous."<sup>1</sup> And as were the kings such in a moral and religious point of view were the people. The descendants of Clovis, accordingly, soon lost their father's energy and vigour, gave rise to a contemptuous phrase which described political imbecility (*Rois Fainéants*), while the kings were superseded, and their place taken by the great counts and dukes employed in their service. These are known in history as "Mayors of the Palace" (*Majores Domūs*); one of the most eminent and able of whom was Pepin of Heristal, whose policy it was to reunite in one kingdom the dominions which had been rent asunder under the weak successors of Clovis—a policy pursued also by his still more famous son, Charles Martel.

The Pope, it will be remembered, owned large territories in Africa, in Sicily and Corsica, in Southern Gaul, as well as in Italy itself. He claimed much of it as the "Donation of Constantine," the Patrimony of St. Peter. The splendid use made of the estates and wealth which thus belonged to him we have had an opportunity of seeing in the case of Gregory the Great; while they often supplied soldiers to defend the Popes when in peril. But through the conquests of Leo the Isaurian in his crusade against image worship, and the encroachments of Aistulf, the Lombard king, these possessions suffered much curtailment, and were threatened with still more. Thereupon the Pope, Stephen II., crossed the Alps, and besought Pepin the Short (the third of that name) to come to his aid against Aistulf. After some delay Pepin, who had already been proclaimed King of the Franks, thereby superseding the weak Merovingian king, responded to the call of Stephen, compelled Aistulf to surrender the lands and privileges in

The kings superseded by the "Mayors of the Palace."

One of these, Pepin the Short, now king, restores Papal territories, and so begins the temporal dominion of the Popes.

<sup>1</sup> Church's "Beginning of the Middle Ages," p. 80.

question, which, with some additions, became the Papal State, gave the Pope the position of a secular prince, and enabled him to pose as an independent temporal sovereign. The event is memorable as properly the first beginning (755) of the temporal dominion of the Popes.

And the service which Pepin had thus begun was continued on a much larger and more extensive scale by Pepin's still more distinguished son, later known as Charlemagne, the greatest, most brilliant, and most renowned personage of the Middle Ages. After the death of Pepin, the Lombards again took up arms, and menaced the possessions of the Church; but at the cry for help from Pope Adrian I., Charles crossed the Alps, took possession of Lombardy, added it to the Frankish kingdom, and then repaired to Rome, and confirmed the gift already conferred by Pepin. The Frankish sovereigns thus enlarged and consolidated the patrimony of St. Peter, and made it, as we have just seen, a political State. And from this time the alliance between the King of the Franks and the Pope became particularly close and friendly. On Christmas Day, 800, when Charles went to worship at the altar of St. Peter's, Pope Leo III. set a golden crown, the diadem of the Cæsars, upon his head, while the people exclaimed: "To Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned of God, the great and peace-giving Emperor of the Romans, life and victory." By Pope and clergy, by the Roman chief and people, as well as by the great men of the Franks, he was chosen and proclaimed Emperor, "at Rome the mother of Empire," and thus continued the Empire of Augustus and Constantine. And so marked did the ascendancy of the Frankish power become that it could be said with every appearance of reality that "when Rome fell, Francia (the Frankish race and kingdom) arose to take the crown" which Rome had lost, and that, in one form or another, through the whole mediæval period, till comparatively modern times—for 1,000 years in fact—it took the place, under the name of "the Holy Roman Empire," which the old Roman Empire had held. "And the Roman Church, which had done such great things, which had consecrated the new and mighty kings of the Franks, and had created for the mightiest of them the imperial claim to universal dominion, rose with them to a new altitude in the world. Humble as she was in outward bearing to the terrible warrior she had crowned, she drew from the act her vast pretensions to be the interpreter of Providence, the giver of kingdoms, the

This service continued on a larger scale by Charlemagne.

Charlemagne crowned Emperor of the Romans by the Pope at Rome.

"The Holy Roman Empire" thus set up on a Teutonic basis.

mistress of nations, the arbitress of the allegiance of mankind. What might not that authority bestow or take away, which had renewed and given the Roman Empire ? ” <sup>1</sup>

Things were gradually prepared for this new développement. The Byzantine Empire still existed at Constantinople, and would continue to exist for centuries to come. But with its bounds so much circumscribed by the Mahomedan conquests, its sovereigns grown weak and feeble, its prestige diminished, its policy even in ecclesiastical questions so much in antagonism to Rome, and the gulf between the two gradually widening, the feeling had been growing in Western lands that the right to the world-empire had been forfeited by the East, and the time had come for its restoration in the West. It was in these circumstances that the name and dignity of the old Roman Empire were revived and re-established on a Teutonic basis.

It is impossible to appreciate the service which the great Emperor Charlemagne did for the Roman Pontiff and for the Latin Church without glancing, however briefly, at the work done by him in Europe. And we must begin by removing one radical mistake. Charlemagne is sometimes spoken of as a Frenchman, and the founder of the French nation. It is a very great and fundamental error. Charlemagne was a thorough Teuton. Frankland became divided into two distinct sections, namely : (1) *Francia Romana*, or *Neustria*, embracing the Franks of the West, among whom the Latin race and the Latin spirit more and more prevailed ; and (2) *Francia Teutonica*, or *Austrasia*, which included the Franks of the East, residing in the region of the Rhine, and among whom the Teutonic spirit predominated. It was to the latter that Charlemagne belonged in blood and in sympathy.

And in every sense Charles, better known as Charlemagne, was a great man. He was large physically. Eginhard, his private secretary, and biographer, informs us that his height was seven times the length of his foot, and it is a reasonable inference that his foot was not less than twelve inches. He was strongly built, too, robust and well-proportioned, of great strength, and untiring activity. “ His appearance,” Eginhard says, “ was always stately and dignified, his whole carriage manly, and his voice clear, though not so strong as his size led one to expect. No man could have got through half the work done by him

Charlemagne a Teutonic sovereign.

His greatness.

<sup>1</sup> Church's “ Beginning of the Middle Ages,” p. 120.

without an exceptionally robust constitution. But his powerful frame was only a symbol and exponent of his still more powerful intellect and genius. "He stands alone," says Hallam, "like a beacon upon a waste, or a rock in the broad ocean. His sceptre was the bow of Ulysses, which could not be drawn by any weaker hand." It shows the high level on which his thoughts were fond of moving that his favourite book to have read to him at meals was Augustine's great work *The City of God*.

No man could be great in those times who was not renowned in war. In this respect Charlemagne outshone all his contemporaries and all his successors. His qualities

Great in war.

as a great general were his sleepless vigilance, the swiftness of his movements, which seemed to make his presence ubiquitous, and an indomitable courage which refused to be defeated. The historians count some fifty-three military campaigns led by him or his generals. Reference has been

His conquests

made to the subjugation of Italy to his rule, and his overthrow of the Lombard power. But the southern and north-east borders of his realm especially were threatened

by great masses of hostile and turbulent races. He pushed back the Saracens, and took from them the great cities of Saragossa and Barcelona. The still heathen Saxons who dwelt between the Rhine and the Elbe gave him great

trouble, his struggle with them lasting for thirty-two years. And in the spirit of the Koran, and against the earnest remonstrance of Alcuin, he compelled them to embrace Christianity at the edge of the sword. But beyond and behind the Saxons were other powerful tribes, constantly encroaching—the Huns or Avars between the Danube and the Save ; and beyond these the Slavonic tribes ; and away

in the north-west the Northmen or Danes, whose ships ravaged the whole Frankish seaboard. Before the end of his career his realm extended from the Baltic and the Elbe in the north to the Ebro in the south, from the British Channel to the Straits of Messina, including what we now call France, Germany, Hungary, and the greater part of Italy and Spain—an immense territory, in which his attention was given to things small as well as great.

Extent of his realm.

For Charles was not more distinguished as a warrior than as an administrator. He was incessantly moving about in different parts of his kingdom. Twice every year, according to Teutonic custom, he met his chiefs and free-men in a great general assembly, and came in contact with all classes from the highest to the lowest. Of the business

Great as an administrator.

transacted in these great assemblies we have still extant a vast collection of Acts or statutes, called "capitularies," an accumulation of laws, judicial decisions, royal orders, moral precepts, matters covering the whole field of life, and dealing with things of all sorts, political, religious, social, and economic. These capitularies were drawn up by Alcuin.

Great as an  
educationalist.

And the mention of Alcuin suggests the great influence of Charlemagne in the promotion of *learning*. What he did through Alcuin may be taken as an example of what he did for the revival and promotion of learning generally. He gathered round him the best scholars of the time, and employed them in the education and elevation of his people. Schools were set up in the chief sees and monasteries, and Greek ordered to be taught. Indeed, hardly anything that would benefit his people was overlooked by him. He encouraged trade, constructed roads, opened great canals, one, for example, connecting the Main and the Danube. As Lord Bryce has said of him: "Like all the foremost men of our race, Charles was all great things in one. . . . There is none of all his qualities that would not be forced out of its place were we to characterise him chiefly by it. . . . As it was his wondrous activity that made him the conqueror of Europe, so was it by the variety of his culture that he became its civiliser. From him, in whose wide deep mind the whole mediæval theory of the world and human life mirrored itself, did mediæval society take the form and impress which it retained for centuries, and the traces whereof are among us and upon us to this day."

His ecclesiastical  
policy.

The ecclesiastical policy of Charlemagne, with its bearing on the evolution of the Papacy, I have reserved for the close. We have seen the service which the Pope did for the sovereign when he set the imperial diadem upon his brow—a service which neither he nor his successors were inclined to minimise. The relation of the Papacy to the new Empire, and the part played by the Pope in its creation, were destined to invest the Pontiff with vastly increased influence, both in the political and ecclesiastical sphere. Since on an occasion so august the Pope had conferred the crown on the great Emperor, he could henceforth claim with apparent justice and much plausibility that the Empire was in his gift, and that the right of either crowning or discrowning sovereigns belonged to him. On this very question—which was to wield the absolute supremacy, which was to set up or depose the other—there was yet to

be an intense and protracted struggle, but meanwhile this at least happened, that the Roman Pontiff who had performed so great an act, which had been the means of setting up this new world-empire, rose with it to new prestige and power, and was in no wise backward in claiming henceforward to raise up and pull down kingdoms and their rulers. Yet although Charles was very sensible of what he owed to the Pontiff, and was sincerely devoted to his interests and those of the Church, he was far too strong a man personally, with too much of the spirit of an absolute ruler, to acknowledge any power superior to his own, and the Pope and the hierarchy were too dependent on him to press any claims of that sort. Even spiritual matters he was not content to leave in the hands of ecclesiastics, even the highest of them. He conceived of his position as that of a theocratic sovereign. He was fond of calling himself, and of being called by others, David, the theocratic King, ruling as God's vicergerent in his kingdom, and, with that unresting activity which distinguished him, exercising a firm and almost ubiquitous control in both the spiritual and civil affairs of the realm. He summoned Church Councils, and presided over them, appointed bishops, and by means of his famous "capitularies" decided points of administration and discipline, and even doctrine. He presided over the Synod of Frankfort in 794, guided its deliberations, and suggested the decrees in which it condemned the decrees of the second Council of Nicæa with regard to images, although those decrees had the approval of Pope Hadrian. This shows how far he was prepared to go in the assertion of his supremacy over Church as well as State. In letters still extant he addresses the Pope, whose reputation was not morally high, in an autocratic, admonitory tone, exhorting him to live honestly, to observe the canons, and to avoid simony. As Emperor of the Romans he claimed to rule over the whole Roman world, and all persons and things in it, civil and ecclesiastic. Charlemagne's own reputation indeed from a moral point of view was not above reproach. He held the Pope strictly in check as regards the supremacy claimed by him over kings and rulers, but by means of the great Empire which he established he extended immensely the realm of the Papacy and the Latin Church itself, and greatly enhanced its prestige and influence.

Friendly, but absolute—a theocratic sovereign.

Rules both Church and State.

Both extended the realm of the Papacy and heightened its prestige.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PAPAL EVOLUTION ATTAINS ITS CLIMAX UNDER HILDEBRAND

THERE was one memorable event, and what cannot be designated an event, but a series of events rather—a *state of things*—which demand our notice before we can be in a position to appreciate the work of Hildebrand. These are the appearance of the false *Isidorian Decretals* (including the earlier forgery, the *Donation of Constantine*) and the singular moral degradation of the Papacy which in point of time coincided with the early life of Hildebrand.

#### Section I.—The False Decretals

The event to which I refer, the appearance of the *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals*, which occurred towards the end of the period with which I have been dealing, had an immense influence in exalting the power and prerogative of the Papacy. The words which Lord Bryce in his *Holy Roman Empire* applies to the *Donation of Constantine* might reasonably be extended to include the whole of the Pseudo-Isidorian collection of documents—"the most stupendous of mediæval forgeries." They made their appearance in France—at Rheims or le Mans—about the middle of the ninth century (850), and are supposed to have been compiled and forged by a monkish or clerical writer, who, in order to give them weight and value, attributed them to the celebrated Isidore, Archbishop of Seville, who was born about 560, and died in 636. Isidore was distinguished as a Church leader and theological writer, and was regarded as the star of the Spanish Church in his time.

A "decretal" defined.

It may be well, however, to preface what I have to say with regard to these so-called *Isidorian Decretals* by explaining what a "decretal" technically is. A *decree* is a Papal ordinance enacted with the advice of the College of Cardinals; a *decretal* is an authoritative rescript or answer of a Pope in reply to a question that has been put to him. A *canon* is a law ordained by a provincial or general Council. A *dogma* is an ecclesiastical law relating to doctrine.

History of the forgery.

This collection of decretals then given to the world (falsely) under the name of Isidore consisted of three parts.

The first part contained, among other things, sixty spurious decretals, purporting to have been issued by Roman bishops from Clement of Rome to Melchiades, who died in 314. The second part contained the forged *Donation of Constantine*, to the effect that Constantine gave to Sylvester, the Bishop of Rome, not only the Lateran palace as a place of residence for him and his successors, but all the imperial insignia, with a large tract of Roman and Italian territory, thus antedating the temporal power of the Popes by more than four centuries. The only bit of solid fact which the so-called *Donation* contains is the gift of the Lateran palace, which Constantine did actually give to Sylvester, as chief of the Roman clergy, on the transference of the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople. The third part of the work contained what purported to be the decretals of Roman bishops from Sylvester onwards, thirty-five of them being pure forgeries.

The object of this colossal forgery was to exalt the clergy above the laity, and the hierarchy, but especially the Pope, above all. The clergy, according to these decretals, are subject to God alone. But the *Cathedra Petri* is the fountain of all authority and power, both spiritual and secular. The Royal power is put far below the Papal. The Pope is the ultimate umpire in all controversy, and from him there is no appeal. He is *Episcopus Universalis*. The chief aim of these *Pseudo-Decretals* was to give to the whole hierarchical, sacerdotal, and Papal system, the growth of many centuries, the glamour and semblance of antiquity, carrying the developments of the ninth century back to the first, second and third. Other collateral objects which they had were to limit the power of the metropolitans, and resist the encroachments of the laity. It is certainly not going too far to trace the system thus produced and supported to "the father of lies." And the curious thing is that these forged and false decretals were full of the most gross and absurd anachronisms. Roman bishops of the second and third centuries are represented as writing in the Frankish Latin of the ninth century; second century bishops are quite familiar with the doctrinal definitions of the Council of Nicæa in 325, and of later Councils; and writers of the second and third centuries appear as quoting Scripture in the version of Jerome which did not appear till the end of the fourth century. The forgery was thus a very clumsy one; and yet these forged decretals were accepted as genuine from the time of their appearance all through the Middle Ages

Object of  
the forgery.

Its crudeness : full of absurd anachronisms.



By whom  
detected and  
exposed.

till the time of the Reformation, and had an immense influence in advancing the pretensions and aggrandisement of the Papacy. Among the first to detect and expose their true character were the Magdeburg Centuriators; by them and others, and especially by David Blondel, the reformed theologian, the fraud was fully exposed and established, and is now admitted by all Roman Catholic historians.

The first  
Pope to  
make effective  
use of  
the decretals  
was  
Nicholas I.

He inter-  
fered in the  
contest be-  
tween  
Ignatius and  
Photius.

Had more  
success in  
other cases.

The only exceptionally great and able man who filled the Papal chair between Gregory the Great and Gregory VII. (Hildebrand) was Nicholas I., who became Pope in 858. He was a man of powerful and subtle intellect and determined, inflexible will, the only Pope worthy of being named along with Leo I., Gregory I., Gregory VII. and Innocent III. His ideal of the Papal prerogative and the Papal supremacy exactly coincided with that embodied in the forged *Isidorian Decretals*, and both in wielding and extending the Papal sovereignty, he was the first, so far as we know, who made effective use of those decretals. He deliberately and openly endorsed the principles laid down in them. He actually guaranteed officially, although in somewhat ambiguous language, that these false decretals had been preserved in the archives of the Roman Church, and thus made the Papacy an accomplice in the fraud. They not only passed as genuine throughout the whole mediæval period, but were embodied in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*. Nicholas interposed in a characteristic way in the great dispute between Ignatius and Photius at Constantinople, and by his arrogant claims contributed to the great schism between the Greek Church and the Roman. Photius appealed to him for his counsel in the matter, but, not content to act as an adviser, Nicholas assumed the position and air of a judge, and as having full jurisdiction in the case, and decided in favour of Ignatius. The only practical outcome in this instance was that Nicholas, the Pope of Rome, and Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, pronounced sentence of condemnation on one another.

Nicholas had more success in the case of Lothair, King of Lorraine, who had divorced his wife without justification in order that he might marry his concubine. The Pope annulled the decrees of synods, and deposed two archbishops who had connived at the immorality of Lothair, and, in spite of the influence of powerful personages, compelled Lothair to take back his lawful wife.

And with equal success he dealt with Hincmar, the Arch-

bishop of Rheims, the most learned and powerful prelate in France, and, in the face of the opposition of Charles the Bald, reinstated a bishop whom Hincmar had, as he held, unjustly deposed. "In the person of Hincmar," as Lagarde says, "he crushed the metropolitans of the Church of France." It was Nicholas who, as Lagarde also suggests, by his despotic policy "created what may be called militant Gallicanism, that is to say, a spirit of resistance to the encroachments of Rome."<sup>1</sup> Altogether, Nicholas did much to extend and exalt the power and prestige of the Papacy. He was the first Pope who was not only anointed, but crowned; and it was at his coronation that an Emperor (Louis II.) first held the stirrup of the Pope's charger while he mounted into the saddle.

Some singular cases occurred in the history of the Popes both before and after the time of Nicholas which may be briefly noted here. The canon law forbade episcopal ordination to be conferred on laymen—prohibiting laymen, that is, to pass directly from the laity to the episcopate, and prohibiting bishops to pass from one church to another. In 767 Constantine, a layman, took possession of the Lateran, had himself ordained to the episcopate, and became Pope as Constantine II. The breach of such canonical rules was at times punished more severely than even gross moral delinquencies. After reigning as Pope for a single year, Constantine was thrown into prison, his eyes put out, and himself beaten before the Council and deposed. But, a little later than the time of Nicholas, a still more singular sentence was inflicted on Formosus, for a breach of canon law by becoming Bishop of Rome, and so Pope, by a change of see in 885. He had escaped molestation during life, and was already dead nine months when his successor, Stephen VI., determined on punishing him. Let Lagarde tell the story. "His body was disinterred and brought before the Council at which Stephen presided. It was placed in a chair as well as might be. The act of accusation was read to it, and it was especially asked: 'Why, being Bishop of Porto, did you with ambitious designs usurp the see of Rome?' The dead Pope was defended by a deacon, who was placed near the body, and charged to answer in his name. The defence was considered insufficient. It was decided that his promotion to the apostolic see had been irregular, and the Council proceeded to depose him,

<sup>1</sup> "The Latin Church in the Middle Ages," pp. 282, 283, by André Lagarde.

stripping him of his pontifical insignia. To complete the ceremony, the body was cast into the Tiber." <sup>1</sup>

But we come now to the other subject to which I referred a moment ago.

### *Section 2.—The Papal Pornocracy*

Soon after the death of Nicholas the occupants of the Papal chair underwent a singular debasement, a process of moral degradation and corruption so loathsome as to be literally indescribable.

Civil dis-  
order in the  
tenth cen-  
tury—the  
"dark age."

The state of civil society generally at the time I speak of was deplorable. Charlemagne's successors at length sank so low, in incapacity and debauchery that it seemed impossible for them to descend further, and under their misrule the very foundations of law and order gave way. Germany, France, and England were being invaded, their cities pillaged, their fields laid waste, and their civil order subverted by the northern pirates. Sicily and Southern Italy were being harried by the Saracens, who, like an army of locusts, crossed from Africa and threatened to turn the land into a desert. Rulers and nobles, weak in everything but wickedness, fought with and slew one another, oppressed the people, and disposed of benefices, bishoprics and abbacies among their favourites, who were little better than themselves. There was no strong central power—no masterful hand anywhere—to put down disorder, violence and crime.

Moral  
degrada-  
tion.

And the moral disorganisation seems to have been even greater than the civil. A competent writer (Höfler) declares that every princely family in the tenth century was tainted with incestuous blood, and that it was difficult to distinguish between wives and sisters, mothers and daughters, or to know who might not be one's close blood relation. And the clergy were not less notorious for their dissoluteness and disregard of decency than the laity. The canons and codes of discipline were utterly set at naught. Hallam says: "The bishops who were to enforce them had most occasion to dread their severity. They were obtruded upon their sees, as the supreme pontiffs were upon that of Rome, by force or by corruption. A child of five years was made Archbishop of Rheims. The see of Narbonne was purchased for another at the advanced age of ten." Bishops under the age of twenty were quite

<sup>1</sup> Lagarde's "Latin Church in the Middle Ages," p. 150.

common. In these circumstances we are not surprised to learn that archbishops oppressed bishops, that bishops disregarded the rights of priests, that priests preyed on the ignorance and superstition of the laity, and that the champion malefactor and oppressor was the Pope. The tenth century was "the dark age"—"the darkest of the dark ages"—beyond any other a time of ignorance and superstition, of anarchy and crime both in Church and State, and the early part of the eleventh century was little better.

In this rapid sketch of the general condition of society I am not forgetting that the subject with which we are just now concerned is the history of the Papacy. No picture is perfect without its background, and I have given it as a most congruous and harmonious background to the picture of the Papacy itself, which with a sort of sinister appropriateness summed up and concentrated in itself an epitome of all the villainy, criminality, and nameless, shameless debauchery of Europe.

All this a fit background for the Papacy itself, which was an epitome of all the vice, villainy, and debauchery of Europe.

In the history of Christianity, I might even say in the history of religion of whatever kind, no church, no religious society ever sank so low as the Latin Church did, and no clergy ever sank so low as the bishops and priests of the Roman faith did in the tenth century. But the boundless moral corruption of the time culminated, or rather reached its nadir, in the Papacy. The infamous period is known as the time of the Papal Pornocracy. The palace of the Lateran, the residence of the Popes, was literally turned into a den of thieves, murderers, and adulterers—a sty where their "sweet Holinesses" (to use Gregory's expression) wallowed in unutterable filth. It is not pleasant to get a whiff of it, any more than it is pleasant to sit on the banks of an open sewer in August. But to have a proper conception of the Papacy, to see how little its boasted but fictitious descent from Peter did for it, it is indispensable to get at least a glimpse of it—taken cautiously from a safe distance.

The corruption of the time culminated in the Papacy.

The iniquity that attained its nadir in the tenth century was not without some ominous preludes in the closing years of the ninth century; but we must pass these by. With the opening of the tenth century the Papacy became a veritable synagogue of Satan, which weltered in a cesspool of vice and crime. Pope followed Pope in quick succession, ending their career (most of them) in deposition, in the dungeon, or by the hand of the assassin. The city of

Preludes of iniquity in the ninth century.

The city of Rome and the Papacy for half a century under the control of three clever women of highest rank and lowest character.

Rome and the Papacy were for more than half a century under the rule of the Marquises of Tuscany and the Counts of Tusculum ; but as these in turn were at the disposal of three beautiful and clever women of highest social rank and lowest moral character, these profligate viragos during that long period continued to fill the Papal throne with their paramours and their bastards.

The succession begins with Sergius III.

The eldest of these Roman amazons, the mother of the other two, was Theodora. It is not certain whether her first husband, Theophylact, was still alive ; what is certain is that she was the mistress of Adalbert of Tuscany and of Pope John X. Her two daughters were Marozia (the cleverest and most successful of the trio) and Theodora. The horrible succession (Satanic rather than Petrine) began in 904 with Sergius III. With a force of Tuscan soldiers Sergius deposed Pope Christopher, who had shortly before deposed his predecessor, took forcible possession of the Papal throne, and bemired it with every vice. Sergius was the paramour of Marozia, by whose assistance he had been raised to the Pontificate. Liutprand, Bishop of Cremona, a contemporary and eyewitness of what he relates, one of the chief authorities for the history of this period, describes Sergius as a man enslaved to every sort of iniquity.

John X.

It was at the instance of Theodora the elder that John X., her paramour, was brought to Rome, and raised to the Popedom. A man of some military talent, after he became Pope he led an army against the Saracens, defeated them, crowned Bernard the Lombard King as Emperor, and announced his victory in the style of a great commander. He had to wage a fierce conflict with Marozia and Alberic (one of her lovers) for power. Marozia seized the castle of St. Angelo, cast John into prison, and had him smothered with a pillow. She then promoted in succession several of her favourites, and finally the illegitimate son of Pope Sergius and herself, to the pontifical office.

John XI.

The bastard son of Marozia reigned as Pope under the name of John XI. Another son of hers, called Alberic II. after his reputed father, became consul, and from the castle of St. Angelo ruled over both Rome and the Papacy for more than twenty years. On the death of his brother, Pope John XI., Alberic appointed his successor, and on his own death his son Octavian, the grandson of Marozia, succeeded him in the civil government, but was also raised to the Popedom when only twenty years old. As Octavian he continued to administer the civil government of the city ;

John XII.

as Pope he assumed the name of John XII. His spiritual interests were submerged by the secular. He retained all the privileges, but discharged none of the duties of the spiritual office. He had the rare distinction of being one of the most vicious and immoral of all the Popes, and that means much. At the instance of the Emperor, Otto the Great, he was arraigned and brought to trial, charged by a Roman synod with almost every sin of which depraved human nature is capable, and deposed as a monster of iniquity. Among the charges that were proved against him were such as these: that he was wont to appear in public full-armed; that he had made a boy ten years old a bishop; that he had ordained another to office in a stable; that he had mutilated a priest; that, like Nero, he had set houses aflame for his entertainment; that he had committed both adultery and homicide; that he lived with his father's mistress; that he had turned the pontifical palace into a place of infamy; that he was accustomed to drink the health of the devil; that at the gaming table he had invoked the aid of Jupiter and Venus, and other pagan deities. Before the synod met he had fled, with all the treasure he could carry with him. He was at length slain by an enraged husband who caught him *in flagrante delicto*.

From this sink of infamy the Papacy was rescued for a time by the interposition of Otto the Great, who came to Rome, was crowned Emperor by the Pope, and put the Romans under an oath never again to elect a Pope without the Emperor's consent. It may be added that the facts just stated rest on the unquestionable authority of contemporary writers, as well as records of councils. They are fully admitted by the leading Roman Catholic historians. One of the latter (Möhler) calls Sergius III., John X., John XI., and John XII., "horrible popes," and declares that at that time "crimes alone secured the Papal dignity." Could there be any more crushing indictment of a system, or a more telling rebuke to high-flown pretensions?

The reform due to the action of Otto saved the Papacy from immediate and complete collapse, and from disappearing amid the stench of its own corruption; but the reform was only temporary. It was soon succeeded by a second period of debasement and disgrace which lasted, with a few interruptions, till the middle of the eleventh century.

We must be content with a single example. In 1033 Theophylact, a boy of ten or twelve years old, was raised

From this infamous condition the Papacy was rescued for a time by Otto the Great.

The reform only temporary: followed by a second period of corruption which lasted till middle of eleventh century.

Benedict IX. to the Popedom under the name of Benedict IX. His elevation was a simple matter of commerce, and was given in exchange for a sum of money paid by the Tusculan family, to which he belonged, to the venal clergy and people of Rome. He turned out perhaps the most profligate of all the Popes—worse even, it is alleged, than John XII. He is said to have combined the insanity of Caligula with the viciousness of Heliogabalus. He acted more like the captain of a gang of banditti than an ecclesiastical or civil ruler, and committed murders and other crimes in open day. Desiderius, who afterwards became Pope, says that he walked in the steps of Simon Magus rather than of Simon Peter, and ran a career of rapine, murder, and every sort of felony, until the Roman people, who could stand much of that sort, grew weary of his wickedness, and drove him from the city.

Three rival  
Popes in  
Rome at the  
same time.

The  
Emperor,  
Henry III.,  
called on to  
interfere.

Bruno con-  
secrated as  
Leo IX.  
with  
Hildebrand  
as adviser.

But enough, and more than enough, of this loathsome and disgusting story. For a time there were three rival Popes in Rome. The streets swarmed with hired assassins; thieves and robbers pursued their evil trade at their own sweet will; and the very churches and tombs of the dead were defiled with violence and blood. The friends of order now appealed to the Emperor, Henry III., the Franconian, to come to Rome and put an end to the scandals. The three rival Popes were deposed, and after several attempts to fill the chair, Bruno, Bishop of Toul, a man of noble birth but high character, and in warm sympathy with the movement of reform, was in 1048 nominated for the office by the Emperor.

He entered Rome in the garb of a pilgrim; his election was confirmed by the Roman clergy and people; and he was consecrated as Leo IX.

### *Section 3.—Hildebrand begins his Career*

Hildebrand  
chosen as  
Leo's sub-  
deacon and  
adviser.

Leo chose as his sub-deacon, financier, and confidential adviser, a young monk of Cluny, who was himself yet destined to fill the Papal chair, to effect extraordinary reforms, and to raise the Papacy which had just sunk to the lowest depths of moral degradation and contempt to the highest pitch of power and influence ever yet attained by it. That young monk was Hildebrand, to be known afterwards as Gregory VII., the greatest of the Popes, one of the rare personalities in history who not only control and mould their own time and generation, but profoundly affect the

ages that come after. After the dreary spell of weary weltering in the depths with Popes like Sergius III., John X., John XII., and Benedict IX., it will be at least a change of air to climb the heights with Hildebrand.

The expression I have just used—"climbing the heights with Hildebrand"—may have raised expectations with respect to this great man that will not be realised. I do not mean that in following the career of Hildebrand we shall find ourselves lifted to any exceptional altitude of a moral or spiritual kind. There is every reason to believe that he was a man of pure moral life, free from the carnal and sordid vices which brand with indelible infamy so many of his predecessors, and that he was bent on effecting a real reform among the clergy and in the Church. But even his warmest panegyrists would hardly claim for him any soaring generosity of spirit, any singular delicacy of moral feeling, or any peculiar sensitiveness to the claims of honour. Hallam's judgment will, I think, be accepted by all who have given careful attention to his history: that "no man could proceed more fearlessly towards his object than Hildebrand, nor with less regard to conscientious impediments." He did not hesitate to employ weapons of a worldly nature, and which even an average sense of honour would have spurned, when they served his purpose. The ruling idea of his life was to make the Papacy supreme over all things sublunary. Now, as Neander well says, "he who surrenders himself to one idea is apt to let it swallow up all other ideas and interests, and even the better feelings implanted in our nature. He who allows zeal for such an idea to usurp the place of a zeal for truth and justice will soon have formed within himself a sort of specialised conscience, which may sanction many things tending to the furtherance of his darling object which a true conscience guided by the Divine law would unhesitatingly condemn." With a fanatical devotion to the ruling aim of his life Hildebrand "united a calculating prudence not always coupled with integrity and truth." Rather than have any impediment put in his way he sacrificed in one instance his own personal convictions, and his friend Berengarius. Even in the prosecution of his main purpose, and in asserting the supremacy of the Papal power, he could trim and temporise to the extent of sacrificing the principle itself when it seemed convenient. He so temporised in his dealings with William the Conqueror of England, Philip of France, Robert of Apuleia, and at times even with Henry IV. himself. His

What  
"climbing  
the heights"  
in his case  
means.



What  
Gregorovius  
says of him.

stern, hard, pitiless, and relentless nature, in which the gentler and nobler sentiments were repressed, was no doubt in part due to the severe, ascetic, monastic life in which he had been nurtured. But it must be admitted that his whole public career was concerned far more with national and international affairs and with political intrigue than with religious interests, and that in the prosecution of his schemes he was not over-scrupulous. Gregorovius, who has given careful study to his history, says that he was essentially a politician rather than a Churchman. He could have recourse to anathema or flattery, bold defiance or subtle insinuation, fierce invective or "whispering humbleness," as it suited, and without any sign of shame or self-reproach. In a word: "his policy was imperial; his resources and arts sacerdotal." As with scathing sarcasm Sir James Stephen says regarding him: "Nature gave horns to bulls; to aspiring and belligerent priests she gave dissimulation and artifice"; and she gave these in a superlative degree to Hildebrand.

His ideal of  
the Papal  
prerogative.

The ideal he had formed of the Papal prerogative was fitted by its arrogance to bewilder and stagger humanity. He had conceived of the occupant of the Papal throne as supreme not only over all the Church, but over all things civil and secular as well, including all kings and rulers of the earth. To give this conception practical effect was the dominant aim of his life, which with all the skill of a powerful intellect and all the strength and energy of an iron will he sought to realise; and in this towering and ambitious aim he in a great degree succeeded. After a desperate and prolonged struggle with Henry IV., and other opponents, he raised the Papacy from an abject condition, which provoked at once the contempt and hatred of mankind, to a height of arrogant and despotic power that must have astounded the generation that witnessed it, and that men look back at with wonder and amazement.

His early  
history.

His origin was humble. He was born between 1015 and 1020 at Saona, a small town in Tuscany, where his father plied the trade of a carpenter. As regards race and blood, he was (as Gregorovius points out) neither a Roman nor a Latin, but a Lombard, of the race which largely populated Tuscany. It is noteworthy that just as the characters of Hildebrand and Napoleon, although moving in different spheres, are of the same order, they sprang from the same Lombard race, and belonged to the same country.<sup>1</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> Gregorovius's "Rome in the Middle Ages," IV., p. 168.

was in a monastery at Rome, over which an uncle of his called Laurence (later Bishop of Amalfi) presided as abbot, that Hildebrand spent his youth and received his early training. It was about the time when Benedict IX. was degrading the Papacy by a career of rapine, murder, adultery and every species of iniquity. We may be sure that the terrible evils of the time, and the perils with which they beset the Papacy, did not escape the notice of the most eagle-eyed youth in Rome, and did not fail to awaken in him both deep thoughts and settled purposes.

The most renowned convent in Europe at that time was that of the Benedictine brethren at Cluny in Burgundy, which was under the immediate supervision of the Pope. It was noted for its learning and for its zeal in the education of the young, for the stringent discipline it maintained in a time of corruption and disorder, and as being the centre of a determined effort to reform the hierarchy and the Church. Its abbot, Odilo, stood at the head of a "congregation" of two thousand similar institutions. It was possessed both of great wealth and of immense influence with bishops, Popes, and kings, and was the source and centre of that reform in the Papacy which by this time had already begun. To Cluny Hildebrand was now sent by his uncle, who no doubt wished to give him the great educational benefit which that famous institution had to offer a youth of such ability and promise. The rigid discipline of Cluny must have made its mark deep in that austere and unbending spirit. Here the commanding intellectual power and strong will of a man born to be a ruler and leader of men were soon in evidence, and won for him the respect, almost the awe, of those with whom he came in contact.

When John Gratian, a man of high character, in 1044 bought the Papal office from Benedict IX. for the purpose of reforming it, Hildebrand became his chaplain and adviser. When soon after, in 1048, Bruno became Pope as Leo IX., Hildebrand was again chosen as his confidential secretary and minister of finance, and was raised to the rank of cardinal. From this moment onwards till his own accession to the Poppedom he is the one moving spirit that dictates and directs the policy of the Lateran. Under five successive Popes, not counting Gregory VI.—under Leo IX., Victor II., Stephen IX., Nicholas II., and Alexander II.—Hildebrand is the author and inspirer of the Papal policy, his the mind that has been shaping, his, too, the hand that has been administering it. It was at his instance, for

Sent to  
Cluny  
in Burgundy.

In 1044 he  
became ad-  
viser and  
chaplain to  
Benedict  
IX.

In 1048 he  
became  
secretary to  
Leo IX.  
(Bruno),  
minister of  
finance, and  
cardinal.

Henceforth  
he controls  
the policy  
of the  
Lateran.

example, that in 1059, under Nicholas II., a Roman Council passed a law which after the lapse of nearly nine centuries still operates—a decree which set aside both the ancient privilege of the Roman clergy and people to nominate their bishop, and the right of the Emperor to confirm their choice, and vested the right of election in the College of Cardinals. The astute Cardinal-Archdeacon took care at the same time to have the fortresses of the Roman counts and barons which had been accustomed to control the Papal elections demolished by the Norman, Robert Guiscard, who was duly rewarded, and who became at once vassal and protector of the Pope.

*Section 4.—Hildebrand ascends the Papal Throne as  
Gregory VII*

He now  
assumes the  
tiara him-  
self: the  
circum-  
stances of  
his election.

But now on the death of Pope Alexander II. the time has come when Hildebrand, the Cardinal-Archdeacon and Chancellor of the Holy See, deems it expedient to assume the tiara himself. Ancient usage prescribed that the successor to the dead Pope should not be chosen till the *third* day after the burial. A requiem service was proceeding in the great church of the Lateran, where the dead body of the late Pope was lying on its bier, when suddenly the plaintive strains were broken by a cry which seemed to rise from all parts of the crowded edifice, and to proclaim Hildebrand as Pope. The latter left the bier, ran to the pulpit, and with impassioned gestures, but in a voice inaudible, addressed the multitude; nor was the storm allayed till one of the cardinals announced that the person already called by the people was also the unanimous choice of the sacred College. Crowned with the tiara, and arrayed in the splendid robes of a Pope-elect, Hildebrand was presented to the people as Gregory VII., while their joyous exultations blended rather incongruously with the mournful dirge of the funeral rites.

The election seemed spontaneous, unexpected, and reluctantly acquiesced in by Hildebrand himself. Grave writers who have studied his career closely are sceptical about its spontaneity. It took place, they point out, in such a way as to disarm the opposition of the imperial Court, and other hostile powers. It occurred so promptly, time was so taken by the forelock, that no chance was given for the nomination of a rival candidate. And the acclamations of the people, which there are methods of stimulating

and even starting well known to men like Hildebrand, seemed to give the sacred College no alternative but to ratify their choice. That the man who behind the scenes had nominated and secured the election of five Popes in succession, that the strong hand that for so many years had controlled and guided the movements of the Papacy, was altogether passive and inactive at the very crisis of his own history, will, they say, be received only by the credulous. It is a point on which we do not feel called upon to offer a positive opinion.

### *Section 5.—The Young King Henry IV*

To prepare us for what follows we must turn for a moment to the imperial Court in Germany. The Emperor, Henry III., had died in 1056 (some seventeen years prior to Hildebrand's accession in 1073) and had been succeeded by his son, as yet only a child, with the title of Henry IV. ; and Henry's mother Agnes, the widowed Empress, became regent of the Empire. She and her son, now in his thirteenth year, were resting one day at Kaiserswerth on the Rhine after an imperial progress when a splendid galley appeared upon the river. The Archbishop of Cologne, attended by a retinue of lords and retainers, disembarked from it, and invited the young prince to inspect the richly furnished and decorated galley. The royal youth eagerly stepped on board, and with boyish delight saw the vessel speed forward like a thing of life. Soon, however, the anxious expression on the faces of the leaders and the desperate efforts of the rowers awoke the keen quick mind of the youth to the fact that he was a prisoner. With prompt decision he leaped into the river, and made for the shore, but was soon captured again. It was the plot of a confederation formed by the Archbishops of Cologne and Mainz with Duke Otto of Bavaria and Count Egbert of Brunswick. The young prince was kept in a state of indulgent captivity while they usurped the power, and plundered the treasures of the government ; and the young sovereign was left without the discipline and education which his future destiny required. They encouraged him in a course of frivolous amusement and even precocious debauch. But by and by the two archbishops discovered that they were the objects of his settled hatred and resentment, the fruit of which they had every reason to dread. The charge of the royal youth was thereupon transferred to the Archbishop of

The imperial Court in Germany.

The royal youth kidnapped.

How he was treated and trained.

When in 1065, at age of fifteen, he began his reign, ill-equipped for his responsibilities.

Had been summoned to Rome by the late Pope to answer for his offence.

But Gregory having obtained his assent to his election was in no hurry to proceed against him. Why so?

Bremen, under whose care the life of licentiousness already begun had free course. When in 1065, at the age of fifteen, Henry was proclaimed of age, and entered on his eventful reign, it can be imagined how ill-prepared he was to fulfil the responsibilities and duties of a sovereign. He had a fine presence and popular address; but the life of profligacy and folly in which he had been taught to indulge soon began to exasperate his subjects. Pope Alexander II. had already before his death summoned him to appear at Rome to answer for his reckless vice, simony, and other offences. He was now in his twenty-third year. There can be no doubt that though the voice was that of Alexander, the will that prompted it was Hildebrand's.

In the meantime Gregory, having obtained the assent of Henry to his election to the Popedom, was in no hurry to force the citation to Rome issued before the death of his predecessor. He knew that difficulties were gathering and accumulating around Henry, and that a more opportune moment for dealing with the young monarch was not far distant. Disaffection was spreading among his people. The divisions and discontents produced by the regency were being widened and deepened by his own licentious and oppressive rules. His Saxon subjects especially were only waiting for a fit opportunity to rise in revolt, and throw off their allegiance. Gregory knew how to wait on the ripening of events, just as he knew how to seize the moment when it came.

#### *Section 6.—Two great Evils to be exterminated and abolished*

In Gregory's belief two great evils lay at the root of all the prevailing corruption: Nicolaitanism and the right of investiture claimed by the Crown and others.

While he is waiting let us note the details of the policy by which he proposed to secure the supreme object of his ambition. In the belief of Gregory *two great evils* lay at the root of the prevalent corruptions in the Church and in the Papacy: the one being what he called Nicolaitanism, or the marriage and concubinage of the clergy; the other, the bondage of the Church to the secular power through the right of investiture in office, claimed by the Crown, and by secular owners. These two sources of evil he was with all his soul and strength bent on removing. Postponing for the time being the question of lay investitures and kindred matters, Gregory's first care was to grapple with the internal evils of the Church, especially those connected with the marriage of the clergy.

## (I) FIRST GREAT EVIL GRAPPLED WITH—MARRIAGE OR CONCUBINAGE OF THE CLERGY

Reference has been made already in Chapter II. on "The Evolution of the Monk" (p. 52), to the earlier legislation on the subject of clerical celibacy, and also to the systematic and widespread evasion both of the canons of Councils and the decrees of Popes on this matter in the centuries that followed. The open or secret concubinage of the clergy in spite of such Canons and decrees had become general, and the immorality resulting notorious and scandalous.

1. First blow aimed at marriage of clergy.

Now, in Gregory's view, very natural in a monk, domestic cares and affections only served to divide and absorb that complete devotion which the Church demands from a sacerdotal ministry. Clerical celibacy would not only deliver the clergy from the evils prevalent among them, it would give the world, as Sir James Stephen puts it, the image of a transcendental consecration and sanctity lifted far above all earthly attachments. It would fill every province with a class of men detached from domestic, local and national ties and obligations, and devoted to the interests of Rome; in whom every feeling would be quenched that could impair or threaten that allegiance. In every priest Rome would have a zealous partisan, while in the collective priesthood the Pope would have a disciplined army, or at least an organised staff of generals and officers, which would turn every parish into a regiment, and be almost irresistible. It is true, the object which he had in view was essentially anti-national, and could be gained only by the complete subordination of the interests of each country to those of the Papal see.

Gregory's view.

With such ideas in his mind, Gregory, a few weeks after his accession (1074) convened a Council in the Lateran, which deposed all married priests, as well as those who got their benefices by means of simony, declaring their priestly acts invalid—commanding laymen, moreover, to give no countenance by their presence to any office which wedded priests might celebrate. It is only when you recollect that almost all the *lower* clergy, and very many of the *higher* grades, were married at this time, that you begin to realise how drastic this measure was, and how deep the wounds it must have inflicted. Keen and poignant was the suffering it caused, pitiful the wail evoked by it, bitter the reproaches, loud the outcry, violent the opposition. Were

Deposes all married priests, etc.

the most tender and sacred domestic ties to be thus severed, families ruined, homes broken up at the bidding of a ruthless Italian priest? Never was pleading more pathetic, more natural, more just and reasonable, or more in vain? Papal legates went forth to every country to secure obedience to the Papal ordinance, which was carried out with the utmost rigour. And the people generally went with the Pope and his legates. For the married clergy it was a hopeless struggle, and there was no use in attempting to prolong the agony. The feeling of the time, which recognised the ascetic and monastic as the highest form of piety, was strongly in favour of a celibate clergy. The married clergy themselves knew that the law of the Church was against them, and had deep misgivings with regard to the position in which they stood. How unequal was their contest with one who had no misgivings on the subject! Many a broken heart and many a blighted life must have pined in secret and died away in silence. Soon remonstrance subsided into murmurs, and murmurs were drowned in the pæan of triumph that arose around the decree of Gregory. More than 800 years have passed since then; but, as Sir James Stephen has it, amid the wreck of laws and institutions, that decree still holds in every land where Rome has found a footing. *Among men, but not of them*—valuing their rights as citizens only as means to the aggrandisement of the Papacy—teachers of duties, the most tender and sacred of which they may not practise—the sacerdotal celibate caste still flourishes, a dismal monument of the genius that devised this method of buttressing and sustaining the Papal despotism, but no less a monument to the lack of true insight, to the moral blindness and perversity that proposed to themselves that despotism as a worthy end.

## (2) THE SECOND GREAT EVIL—THE SYSTEM OF LAY INVESTITURES

2. The second blow aimed at the system of investitures.

The system explained.

The blow thus delivered with such unrelenting vigour was speedily followed by another that made kings reel upon their thrones, and the echoes of which reverberated far and near. The second blow was aimed at the system of lay *investitures*. Just a word or two in explanation of the custom of investiture. It was closely connected with the feudal system, which moulded society in the Mediæval period, and extended its influence even to the Church. Put in the briefest way possible, feudalism was an arrange-

ment of society on the basis of land tenure—an arrangement in which, from the King down to the humblest land-owner, all were bound together by obligations of defence and service—the lord to protect the vassal, the vassal to do service to his lord. Now let it be remembered that the higher clergy at this time held not much less than half the land and half the property in Europe. They possessed, in many cases, towns, duchies, smaller territorial divisions, and territorial rights and privileges, such as customs, tolls, coinage of money, and the like. It was, therefore, asked, naturally enough—if the hierarchy must possess territories, domains, and the rights pertaining thereto, then why should they not, just like other vassals, do homage to their sovereigns, acknowledge their dependence, submit to be invested by their suzerain, and receive from his hand the ring and crosier as the insignia of office? Is it not clear that to allow such vast territories and territorial prerogatives to pass beyond the control of the monarch and the civil government, and to be subject exclusively to the supervision of the Pope, would make civil government impossible? Was not the demand of the secular ruler, therefore, just and reasonable—that the clergy, the higher clergy especially, should not enter on the temporalities attached to their office, until they had done homage for those temporalities, received investiture, and undertaken to fulfil, either themselves, or by proxy, the duties and obligations connected therewith? It was to this source that Gregory traced the simony and kindred abuses then so rife—the dependence of the hierarchy, including the Pope himself, on the secular power. So long as rulers might bestow the sees and abbeys in their realms on whomsoever they pleased the Papal dominion at which he aimed was a dream, clerical independence a fond imagination. Moreover, their choice, Gregory insisted, was usually determined by corrupt motives, and the persons chosen were often most unworthy. Church benefices were sold to the highest bidder, and the purchaser took care to indemnify himself by a like mercenary disposal of his own patronage. We think that Gregory missed the real cause of the prevalent corruption. So long as the possession of a spiritual office means enormous wealth and influence, some men, even ecclesiastical men, being what they are—for there is a good deal of human nature even in ecclesiastics—will be willing to pay a price of some kind for such preferment, and needy proprietors, not over-burdened with principle, will be loth to lose the chance

The case for  
the Crown  
and pro-  
prietors.

The case for  
Gregory.

The case  
against him.



Gregory's  
real object :  
he would  
make the  
Pope  
supreme  
over all  
things sub-  
lunary—  
over both  
kings and  
their sub-  
jects.

of replenishing their empty coffers at the expense of such aspirants. Gregory, however, had got possessed with the idea that the root-evil was the dependence of the clergy on the secular princes in the way which I have indicated. He would devote his whole energy, therefore, to put an end to that dependence. He would make not the secular prince, but the spiritual ruler, *i.e.*, the Pope, supreme over all earthly princes and potentates. The property of the Church, now desecrated by being sold by princes, he would bring within his own control. The pretensions which he put forth on these points were simply amazing in their audacity. He announced to all kings, emperors and rulers that since all human authority and all sublunary power were derived from God, and since God Himself had delegated His sovereignty over men to His earthly vicar, the sovereign Pontiff, universal obedience was due, as a divine right, to such vicar, from whom, as the supreme earthly suzerain, kings and emperors held their crowns, patriarchs and bishops their mitres. He reminded the French King of the subjection of his kingdom to the Holy See, and commanded his legates to collect from every house in France the annual tribute of a penny, in token of that subjection. He informed the King of Hungary that his territories were really the property of the Roman Church, and when the King ventured to resist the claim, he was deposed and dethroned, and his crown given to a rival claimant, who, more prudent than his predecessor, acknowledged himself a vassal of the Pope, and paid him tribute. He conferred the title of King on the Duke of Dalmatia, stipulating for a yearly payment of 200 pieces of silver "to the Holy Pope Gregory and his successors lawfully elected, as *supreme lords of the Dalmatian kingdom.*" I give these only as specimens of the pretensions now put forward by him. It has been said that "the rescripts of Trajan scarcely exhibit a firmer assurance both of the right and power to control every other authority, whether secular or sacerdotal, throughout the civilised world."

At a Roman  
synod in  
1075  
Gregory  
threw down  
the gaunt-  
let.

It was at a Roman synod in 1075 that Gregory threw down the gauntlet, and began his world-historical contest on the subject of investiture. He deposed and excommunicated every bishop, every ecclesiastic who received investiture from the hands of a layman; and every emperor, prince or potentate who should confer investiture was excommunicated and laid under the ban of the Church. He excommunicated by name five of Henry's counsellors who

had been found guilty of simony ; and to Henry himself he wrote a letter, requiring him to obey the sacred decrees just enacted, and to avoid those on whom condemnation had been pronounced. Just then Henry was engrossed with the insurrectionary Saxons. At first, therefore, he dismissed his anathematised counsellors, but, when the war was over, he reinstated them, and set at nought the Papal denunciation. Just then Gregory had more than enough to occupy him at Rome.

On the night before Christmas, 1075, a tremendous storm, that was long remembered, fell upon Rome and Italy. Though it was the time of full moon, the thick dark clouds shut out her light, and in the city the darkness was impenetrable. It was thought by many that the day of judgment had arrived. Yet the Pope and a number of his priests made their way across the city through the darkness and the tempest to keep vigil in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Soon another procession was observed advancing stealthily in the same direction, armed as if for some desperate enterprise. At the head of it was Cencius, a wild licentious noble, a survivor of the band of lawless men who a short time before dominated and disturbed the city, in the centre of which Cencius still held a fortress. As his way of life had been denounced by Gregory, and ruin threatened him, Cencius conspired with others, whose hostility the Pope had incurred, to rid themselves of the stern and meddlesome Pontiff. In the brief pauses that interrupted the roar of the tempest, the voice of Gregory and the measured sound of worship were heard issuing from the church, when suddenly the Pope was seized, and a deep sword-wound inflicted on his forehead. Stripped of his holy vestments, bound with ropes, and subjected to cruel indignities, he was carried off to a tower in the castle of his captor, to be removed at dawn to exile or to death. Even there, however, it would seem, he was tended by the care and sympathy of a woman of high rank, who dressed his wound, and through the cold winter night kept him warm with furs. When early in the morning the news of the sacrilegious violence spread, the fortress was quickly surrounded by an angry multitude, demanding surrender, and threatening to demolish the castle. A drawn sword is said to have been aimed at the Pontiff's breast, when an arrow from below slew the assassin. When the walls were threatening to give way to the attacks of the populace, Cencius threw himself at the feet of his prisoner,

Just now  
Gregory has  
his own  
troubles at  
Rome.

begging for pardon and for life. All through the agitations and perils of the scene it is said that Gregory bore himself with a courage which surprised and awed his enemies. He now saved Cencius from the fury of an enraged crowd, vouchsafed in words at least the pardon which he sought, and then returned once more to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore to continue and finish the service which had been so suddenly interrupted.

*Section 7.—The Struggle with Henry reaches its Crisis*

It was Henry's quarrel with his Saxon subjects that paralysed him in his contest with Gregory.

Meantime affairs were wearing to a crisis in Germany. It was Henry's quarrel with Saxony that, added to his reckless and licentious life, created most of his difficulties, paralysed him in his struggle with Gregory, and brought upon him all his humiliations. The rights of Saxony were wantonly set at nought by him. Saxon princes and nobles were imprisoned; and their estates confiscated. The people were harassed, pillaged, and enslaved by the garrisons established in their midst. Petitions for redress and justice were met only with insult and derision. Suddenly, Henry found himself surrounded and besieged in his Castle of Hartzburg by a mass of insurgent and armed Saxons, under the command of Otto of Nordheim, who has been described as the William Tell of Saxony.

It was when Henry had compelled the Saxons to capitulate that an embassy appeared at his Court requiring him to submit to the terms of Gregory. How the Papal messengers were received by Henry.

I cannot wait to recount the varying fortunes of the conflict that now ensued between Henry and his insurgent Saxon subjects under Otto. Suffice it to say that after some severe and humiliating reverses the whole strength of Germany was at length gathered on the Elbe by Henry with a view to crush the power that had humbled him, and that, overpowered by Henry and his allies, Otto and his brave Saxons were fain to capitulate and to make the best terms possible. Henry had just returned from achieving this signal victory when an embassy from the Pope appeared at his Court to reprove him for his offences, calling upon him not only to reform his life, but to cease from intercourse with his excommunicated councillors, to carry out the measures with regard to investiture, and in case of refusal threatening him with excommunication and deposition.

Flushed with the recent victory it may be imagined in what ill humour Henry was to comply with such demands. He dismissed the Papal messengers with insult, and induced a synod of German bishops to make common cause with him, and to pronounce sentence of deposition on the Pope—

a judgment which was endorsed also by a synod of Lombard bishops. The letter informing Gregory of the sentence began thus: "Henry, King by the grace of God, and not by the will of man, to Hildebrand no longer apostolical, but a false monk"; and it ended with these words: "This sentence having been pronounced on you by us and all our bishops, descend from the apostolical chair you have usurped; let another ascend to the throne of Peter who will not cloak deeds of violence with religion. I, Henry, and all our bishops, bid you come down, come down." In the same letter the Pope was accused of having assailed the divine right of kings, of having tyrannised over bishops and made them tools and slaves, and of having stirred up the people against the clergy. An envoy called Roland was sent to Rome to convey this letter, and to inform the Pope and all concerned of the sentence passed on him.

#### *Section 8.—The Papal Interdict on Henry*

The Roman Lent synod had assembled in the Vatican. The Pope, arrayed in his splendid pontifical robes, was seated on his throne. The aisles were filled with an array of bishops and nobles; and near the Pope sat Agnes, the Empress-mother. The air was laden with the fragrance of incense, and the sculptured roof had hardly ceased to echo with the strains of the "Veni Creator" when Roland startled the assembled hierarchs by communicating the King's command, and by calling upon Gregory to descend without delay from the throne of St. Peter, which he had usurped, and by summoning the conclave to appear before the King at Pentecost to receive a Pope at his hands. "This pretended pastor," he added, "is a ravenous wolf." The effect may be imagined. No hawk suddenly descending at a barn door among a flock of chickens ever caused such a fluttering and such incoherent cries. Swords were drawn, and the bold envoy would have paid for his temerity with his blood but for Gregory, who descended from his throne, allayed the tumult, received from the envoy the letters he had brought, then returned to his chair, and read them in a firm voice to the angry Council. Then raising his eyes towards heaven, with a clear voice which resounded through the most distant arches of the lofty edifice, Gregory invoked the chief of the apostles to hear, and the blessed Paul and all the saints to bear witness, while in the name of the sacred Trinity, and by the power and authority of

How Roland, Henry's envoy, was received at the Roman Lent synod by the Pope..

The Pope replies by laying his interdict on Henry and by absolving all Christians from allegiance to him.

Peter, he interdicted to King Henry, son of Henry the Emperor, the government of the whole realm of Germany and Italy, absolved all Christians from their allegiance to him, and bound him with the bond of anathema "that the nations may know that thou art Peter, and that upon this rock the Son of the living God hath built His Church, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He also excommunicated the bishops who had united with Henry at the Synod of Worms.

The first effect a feeling of astonishment.

The first effect of the Pope's sentence was a feeling of astonishment. The audacious pretension not only to exclude the King from the communion of the Church, but to depose him from his throne and government, and absolve his subjects from their allegiance, took away men's breath. The general feeling was that he had overshot the mark, and by straining his power too far had over-reached himself. The King whom he had pretended to depose was a young man in the prime of life, with an ability and force of will which his early self-indulgence did not seem to have impaired, who had just succeeded in stamping out rebellion in one of the provinces of his realm, who had many vassals at his service, and was by far the most formidable prince in Christendom. The contest he had challenged seemed hopeless for Gregory, and yet Gregory had made a careful calculation of the chances, and went into it with no purpose but to win. The loyalty of Henry's subjects had been undermined by the vice and oppression of their sovereign. The cause of Henry was the cause of the libertine and the tyrant; the cause of Gregory seemed the cause of purity and firm discipline, the cause of the vicar of God, upheld by supernatural sanctions; although, however much the Pope may have felt himself guarded by the heavenly powers, he did not fail to make sure of strong earthly alliances, Norman and Tuscan.

But Gregory had carefully calculated the chances.

The defection of his people accelerated by a series of coincidences.

The effect produced by the Pope's ban was soon manifest in Germany. The people began to fall away from Henry. And their defection was accelerated by a variety of singular coincidences.

Thus, at an Easter synod in 1076, William, Archbishop of Utrecht, after having depicted the career and character of Hildebrand in the darkest colours, in the name of the synod pronounced him excommunicated. The sentence had hardly escaped his lips when he was suddenly smitten down by death. The church in which the sentence was pronounced was shortly after struck by lightning and reduced

to ruins. Three more of the anti-Papal prelates speedily followed the archbishop to the grave by deaths that seemed to the popular imagination special visitations of Providence. Henry's best general and strongest supporter, Godfrey of Lorraine, fell by the hand of an assassin. The effect produced in a superstitious age by such a succession of what appeared terrible judgments of heaven on those who opposed Gregory may be imagined. Each day brought the news of some new secession from the King. The members of the Synod of Worms, who had taken part in Gregory's deposition now repaired to Rome to make their peace with him. As for Henry, even his guards deserted him, and his personal attendants seemed to avoid his presence. A new insurrection was already on foot in Saxony with Otto at the head of it; and Henry, having marched northwards to meet the Saxon's insurgents, was repulsed by Otto and compelled to retrace his steps.

Defeated by the Saxon insurgents.

*Section 9.—A great Council of German Princes, Barons, and Prelates meets on the Rhine*

Meanwhile in the autumn of 1076 the great German princes and prelates, counts and barons had convened a Council to deliberate on the deposition of their sovereign. The conference was held in a great pavilion in the midst of a vast encampment on the Rhine, over which many a banner floated in the breeze. Not far off, on the opposite bank of the river, was Henry waiting where he might receive prompt news of the progress of the conference. The records of it show that the King's wrongs against Rome were considered light and trivial as compared with the injustices of his government towards his own people. At length it was decided to proceed to the election of a new sovereign; and soldiers were sent to secure the person of Henry, who now, to avert the impending sentence, offered to transfer the powers of government to the higher princes until the Pope should himself attend a Diet at Augsburg, investigate the charges against him, and give his decision. Should he remain excommunicated after February 23rd, 1077, his crown should be given to another. Meantime he engaged to live as a private person, without an army, without access to any place of worship.

A great Council meets on the Rhine to consult on his deposition,

and decides on electing a new sovereign, when Henry offers a compromise.

*Section 10.—Henry IV. at Canossa*

The pretensions of Gregory had thus already become a terrible practical reality. "The fisherman of Galilee had

The supremacy claimed by

Gregory has become a terrible reality.

set his foot on the neck of the conqueror of Pharsalia. The vassal of Otto the Great had reduced Otto's successor to vassalage. The Empire which heathen Rome had wrung from a crushed and bleeding world, 'the Ghost of that Empire' had extorted from the ignorance and superstition of mankind." The relation of the Empire to the Papacy had been inverted; the Pope had asserted his supremacy over the greatest of earthly potentates.

Henry determines to submit to the Pope and obtain remission of his sentence.

Crosses the Alps with his wife and infant child in the depth of winter.

Two months have already been passed by the King at Spires, cheered only by the companionship of his young Queen Bertha, who had kept her purity unsullied amid all the licence of the Court, and her fidelity unshaken when his best friends proved false—a fidelity which he now learned to return with a devotion almost equal to her own. In less than ten weeks, should he remain excommunicated, the crown would for ever pass from him. He determined, therefore, in order to obtain remission of the Pope's sentence, to go to Italy, to seek an interview with the Pope, and humiliate himself so far as to go through the forms of penitence. In pilgrim garb, with no escort but his faithful wife, carrying in her arms their infant child, accompanied by a single servant, in the depth of a winter so severe that for four months the Rhine was a mass of solid ice, he set out for Italy, to reach which he had to cross the Alps. Of the many courtiers who till lately thronged his palace, and shared his carousals, there was not one to bear him company. He got some peasants to cut a path for him through the ice and snow up one of the great Alpine passes. The upward ascent was hard enough, but it was nothing to the fatigues and dangers they encountered after they had reached the summit—the weary tramp through the frosty winds of the high Alpine solitudes, which cut them like knives, and over wide wastes of untrodden snow, down which they made their way, sometimes crawling upon hands and feet, sometimes descending by means of rope-ladders, sometimes plunging and rolling headlong down the steep glaciers, wrapped in the skins of beasts shot by the King. At length they reached the sunny plains of Lombardy. But more welcome than the level plain or the genial sunshine was the warm greeting of the Lombards.

The Pope had already started on his journey to Augsburg, conducted by Matilda, the Margravine of Tuscany, known as "the great Countess," at the head of a military escort, when the news of Henry's approach with a force of Lombards caused her to withdraw with her charge to the

fortress of Canossa. She ruled almost the whole of Italy from Lombardy to the Papal States. But Henry was too intelligent to stake his fortunes on the swords of his Lombard vassals. He knew that to recover the cause he had almost lost he must for the present submit to the conditions of his great antagonist.

It was the morning of the 25th of January, 1077. The streams of the Apennines were frozen, and the earth clad with snow when Henry, in the garb of a penitent, as required by Gregory, that is, in a thin shirt of white linen, and barefooted, ascended the path which led to the gate of the fortress-castle of Canossa—with what emotions of pity and wonder, perhaps of scorn, onlookers must have gazed on his noble features and kingly form, as he passed through the first and second gateway, and reached the third to find it closed against him. There he stood from sunrise to sunset, stiff with cold and faint with hunger. A second day witnessed a repetition of the same indignities, inflicted by one who called himself the vicar of the gentle and compassionate Redeemer. A third day from dawn to nightfall saw the same spectacle, the same parody on the real workings of a broken and contrite heart. Still the stern Pontiff turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the humbled sovereign. His most abject offers were rejected. Matilda pleaded earnestly for her royal kinsman, but in vain. The Diet of Augsburg must decide the matter, he said. The point was almost reached when prayers for pardon would give way to indignation and defiance. Deep murmurs from Gregory's own adherents told him that further exactions would be perilous to himself, and led him to consent to admit the degraded penitent to his presence. The fourth day had already dawned when still in the garb of a penitent he prostrated himself before the stern old ex-monk, "from the terrible glance of whose countenance," it has been said, "the eye of every beholder recoiled as from the lightning." Cold and hunger, nakedness and shame had crushed the spirit of the young ruler. He wept and cried for mercy. At last the arrogant hierarch consented to remove the sentence. But even his tender mercies were cruel. From the humbled sovereign he exacted a promise to submit himself to the future judgment of the apostolic see; to resign the crown should that judgment require it; to abstain meanwhile from the exercise of the royal prerogative; to acknowledge that his subjects had been lawfully released from their allegiance to him; to

And in the garb of a penitent appears at the gate of the Castle of Canossa.

His deep humiliation.

The promises exacted by Gregory.



banish his former friends and councillors ; to govern his dominions, should he be restored, in obedience to the Papal behests ; to enforce all Papal decrees ; and, finally, never to avenge his present humiliation. Having pledged him by oath to these conditions the haughty old priest pronounced the words of absolution.

Two great scenes stand out in history.

Gregory's apparent victory a real defeat.

"Two scenes," says Gregorovius, "will ever shine in history, monuments of the greatness of the Papal power—one, the terrible destroyer, Attila the Hun, retiring before Leo ; and the other, Henry IV. kneeling in his shirt before Gregory." But, as Gregorovius adds, "human affairs have a limit both in height and depth, from which they ascend or descend. The same moment saw Gregory at the zenith of fortune, and Henry at the nadir of humiliation. From that moment the Pope slowly sank to his ordinary level ; and the King slowly rose erect." The excess of the victory speedily avenged itself on Gregory, and turned it into a defeat. There never was a more signal example of power stretched so far as to overreach itself. The base indignities to which the arrogant priest subjected his prostrate enemy were as unwise, impolitic, and short-sighted as they were unchristian and inhuman. Had it been his object to exasperate beyond endurance the King himself, and all generous hearts, and to transmit to future ages a monument and a hatred of spiritual despotism alike imperishable, he could have devised no surer method than that adopted by him.

### *Section II.—Henry recovers Courage and renews the Conflict*

Henry in concert with the Lombards is soon forming plans of revenge.

It was no wonder that, when the King made his way back, to the Lombard camp he was received with coldness, almost with contempt. They hated Hildebrand, whom they regarded as a usurper of the Papal chair ; and, because at the hands of such a usurper Henry had submitted to indignities unworthy of a King, they were half inclined to transfer the crown from him to his infant son Conrad, and then march on Rome to depose the audacious Pontiff. Soon, however, the natural revulsion of feeling was past and over, and in concert with the Lombard nobles and bishops Henry was cogitating plans of revenge. Not a week had elapsed when, on his way to Mantua to hold a synod, the Pope found that he had been inveigled there with a view to his being seized and imprisoned, and was glad to return to the shelter of the fortress of Canossa. He must already

have begun to feel how flimsy and superficial was the victory he had won, how little he knew of the nature with which he had been dealing, and what a bitter harvest he might have to reap from that winter's sowing at Canossa. Henry had resumed his old kingly mien, exercising in the most open manner the royal prerogatives he had been coerced to renounce. He seized and imprisoned the Papal legates, recalled the excommunicated councillors, hurled defiance at the Pope, and was soon rewarded by the enthusiastic sympathy of his Lombard subjects. Canossa which had witnessed his humiliation had now become the prison of the Pope who had degraded him. The Lombard and Tuscan cities were in the hands of Henry; and the mountain passes were guarded by his troops. The zeal of his followers was revived by his reviving courage, and he found himself the leader of an army with whom even Gregory was compelled to temporise.

The Diet which was to be held at Augsburg was actually called to meet at Forcheim, and was attended by the Papal legates. When the German princes in attendance insisted on prompt and decisive measures, and elected Rudolf, Duke of Suabia, as King instead of Henry, the legates confirmed the choice in the name of Gregory, and placed the crown upon his head. While the Pope took care not to disavow the act of his legates, it is now known that he did not mean to be bound by it, unless it suited him. The astute old diplomatist, foreseeing a desperate civil conflict, and the possible triumph of Henry, professed neutrality, and reserved his final decision. Though Germany was torn asunder and convulsed by the two rival parties, the Pope's utterances were ambiguous, and kept alive the contest.

A Diet at Forcheim elects Rudolf King instead of Henry.

But Gregory foreseeing the possible triumph of Henry reserves his decision.

It soon appeared that from the Rhine to the Oder the hearts of the German people still yearned after their King. They recalled that he had been as much sinned against as sinning. They recalled his courage, his courtesy, his munificence. They construed his faults as excesses due to youth and the bad upbringing of guardians who had kidnapped and betrayed him. The indignities of Canossa and the treason and treachery of Forcheim they resented as insults inflicted on themselves. The people who cared at once for the honour of the Crown and the independence of the civil power were joined by those—and a large number they were—who suffered from Gregory's edicts against simony and clerical marriage, while both together were

A conflict inevitable.

augmented by that immense motley multitude who press upon a cause when it seems likely to triumph. Rudolf, on the other hand, could count on the allied princes, the chief ecclesiastics, the earnest co-operation of the Saxons, and the secret but not the open countenance of the Pope. A conflict between these hostile powers was now inevitable.

Henry on his way to Germany with a great and growing army.

In the spring of 1077 the news spread that Henry was on his way to Germany. Not only from Franconia, his family state, but from Burgundy and Bohemia, he was hailed with welcome; and from Bavaria and Suabia large numbers followed his banner, which soon waved over the principal cities of the Rhine. Sagacity much inferior to that of Gregory could see that the contest now on foot in Germany could only be decided by the arbitrament of the sword, and that the sword of Henry seemed keener and better handled than that of Rudolf. By siding with either too soon he would be certain to bring upon himself the vengeance of the victor. To temporise, to write ambiguous

Gregory temporises.

The armies meet, but the issue is indecisive: Gregory still temporises.

letters to the rivals, calling both of them kings—this is the policy that just now suits the successor of Peter. His letters fly like snow flakes, but his exhortations are vague and ambiguous. The two armies met in the autumn of 1078, but the issue was indecisive. What better advice could the Pope give than to recommend both to rely on Peter? The Saxons remonstrate with Gregory with respect to this double dealing. They remind him that he had deposed their King, and forbidden them under fearful menaces to acknowledge him. They had obeyed at great risk, and many of them had lost their property and their lives. "Yet the legates of Henry are received by your legates at Rome. Holy Father, your piety assures us that you are guided by honourable, not by subtle motives, but we are too gross to understand them. We can only say that this way of dealing with two parties has produced civil war, murder, pillage, conflagration. We conjure you to look into your own heart, to have regard to your own honour, to fear the wrath of God, and for your own sake, if not for ours, to rescue yourself from responsibility for the torrents of blood poured out in the land." The Pope answered by actually disavowing the acts of his legates at Forcheim, by lauding his own disinterestedness, and by promising salvation to those who would persevere unto the end.

Rudolf defeated at Fladden.

The hostile armies met once more—this time at the village of Fladdenheim, near Mülhausen. Rudolf was driven from

the field with great loss ; but the fortunes of the day were retrieved by the brave Otto who turned the rout into a victory. The news of Otto's victory reached Rome when Gregory was presiding at a great Council in the Lateran. A voice from heaven, we are told, audible only to himself, guided him to the decision which he now delivered. He once more excommunicated and deposed Henry, deprived him of his royal rank, forbade all Christians to acknowledge him as King, and "gave, granted, and conceded" that Rudolf might rule over the German and Italian Empire. He added the prediction that before the festival of St. Peter Henry should neither reign nor live—a prediction which did not prove him infallible, for Henry both lived and reigned for a quarter of a century after this. It is remarkable too that the "voice from heaven" delayed speaking to Gregory till the news had reached him of Henry's defeat by Otto.

heim, but Otto turns the rout into a victory for Rudolf.

The Pope renews his deposition of Henry.

The King and his adherents were not slow to retaliate. A synod of German bishops deposed Gregory, and elected Guibert, Archbishop of Ravenna, as Pope in his stead under the title of Clement III., and a great army was mustered to crush the forces that allied themselves with Rome. The armies met on the banks of the Elster, near Merseburg, but, once more through the genius of Otto, Henry was defeated ; but the victory was turned into a defeat by the death of Rudolf, who fell by the hand of the famous Godfrey of Bouillon, the hero of *Jerusalem Delivered*. And in the death of Rudolf the turning point in the conflict between the Pope and the sovereign has at length arrived. The tide on which Gregory has hitherto been borne to victory now begins to ebb.

The King and his adherents elect a new Pope.

Henry once more defeated by Otto, but the death of Rudolf was the turning of the tide.

*Section 12.—Henry enters Rome ; Gregory withdraws, and dies an Exile at Salerno*

Rudolf dead, Henry crossed the Alps, descended into Italy with a strong army, and before the summer of 1080 closed the German standards were floating at the gates of Rome. After a three years' siege the gates of the city were thrown open, and Henry and his army entered. Gregory took refuge in the castle of St. Angelo, while Guibert, Clement III., the anti-Pope, was consecrated in the Church of the Lateran, and set the imperial crown of Germany and Italy on the brows of Henry and Bertha. The approach of Robert Guiscard, returning from Constantinople with a

Henry once more crosses the Alps, and soon the German standards are waving at the gates of Rome.

The city taken, Gregory an exile in the castle of St. Angelo, and Henry and

Bertha  
crowned by  
the anti-  
Pope  
Clement III.

mighty host, compelled Henry and his now reduced army to withdraw, and saved the Pope from deeper humiliations. Gregory returned to the Lateran, but a bloody conflict began to rage between the soldiers of Robert and the citizens who had become attached to Henry. Every house became a fortress. When the sun went down, the night was illumined by a light brighter than the stars. Flames broke out in every part of the city; two-thirds of the city perished; and what remained was turned into a pandemonium by the plunder, carnage and lust of the soldiers of Robert.

Gregory's  
last words.

It was certainly not in the spirit of a victor, but humbled and sad at heart that Gregory withdrew, a voluntary exile, to the castle of Salerno. Nor did he long survive. His last words, as he was dying, were: "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and therefore I die in exile."

### *Section 13.—Estimate of Gregory's Character and Rule*

The  
despotism  
of Gregory  
not a  
counter-  
poise to the  
feudal  
despotisms.

It is sometimes pleaded that the spiritual despotism conceived and consummated by Gregory was a needful counterpoise to the feudal despotism of the civil power at that time. It seems to me—and I see that this is the judgment of historians like Dr. Döllinger and Lord Acton—that the tyranny founded and set up by Gregory was, if possible, even more odious than the other, that it really did nothing to abate the oppression of the feudal despotisms; while, so far as one can judge, it was actuated by an ambition neither less proud, nor less selfish, nor less regardless of consequences, nor less unscrupulous, nor less worldly than that of his secular antagonist. Nor can we forget the unjust wars which Gregory's ambition inspired and fomented; the subjects he released from their allegiance and encouraged to rebel against their sovereign; the thousands of lives sacrificed, and the seas of blood spilt through his cunning and equivocal silence. We cannot forget the hard and pitiless spirit, the revengeful and unrelenting temper, the insatiable lust of power of this so-called vicar of the meek and merciful Redeemer.

The  
despotism  
he estab-  
lished.

An intolerable despotism it was which he had established. He made the Pope the supreme, irresponsible dictator of the Church in all the West, the only source of lawful jurisdiction, and the final court of appeal. By the large use which he made of Papal legates, a sort of ecclesiastical pro-consuls, invested with full Papal jurisdiction whom he sent forth

to every country and to every quarter of the world, and who were in fact an essential element in the spiritual despotism he created, he struck a heavy blow at the independence of national churches, while at the same time, and by the same means, he swallowed up in his Papal absolutism the most important rights and privileges of the bishops. Even metropolitans were compelled to yield obedience to the Papal nominee, though he might only be a priest. His arrogant pretensions, of course, reached their climax in his claim of absolute, supreme authority over all kings and rulers, his claim that to him belonged the prerogative of both appointing and deposing them.

It was certainly the aim of Gregory to reform the Papacy, to lift it out of the mire of vice and crime and profligacy into which it had been plunged, and to remove certain abuses and corruptions. And in this to some extent he succeeded—not without subjecting the Church to the bonds of other evils and abuses. As Hallam says, “The disinterested love of reform to which candour might ascribe the contention against investitures is belied by the general tenor of his conduct, exhibiting an arrogance without parallel, and an ambition that grasped at universal and unlimited monarchy.” The study of his career leaves the impression that he was unscrupulous, that he was not above employing the weapons of dissimulation and duplicity, and that when it did not suit him to press his high-flying principles he could let them slide. Philip of France was hardly less dissolute than Henry of Germany, and he was equally guilty of simony and all the other evils connected with investiture. Gregory did threaten him, but Philip made no attempt to mend his ways, and Gregory did not interpose further. There was even less principle in his dealing with William the Conqueror of England, and Robert the Conqueror of Sicily. Both were steeped in blood and simony. They were the most shameless, cruel and oppressive of usurpers. The groans and curses of the people they oppressed cried aloud for vengeance against them. Curious that for these tyrants and their tyrannies both in Church and State the righteous wrath of the holy representative of heaven had no menaces, no exhortations even to repentance. It was under a banner consecrated by the Pope, and with his express blessing, that William went to England to conquer it. William ruled with an iron hand both in Church and State, treated all Church property as freehold, and was quite as deeply dyed in

He sought to effect some reforms, but these more than counter-balanced by faults both of character and conduct.

simony as Henry. Yet Gregory, who wanted his help against Henry, winked at his transgressions, overflowed in his expressions of goodwill, and addressed him in the blandest language of fatherly esteem and even fulsome flattery. As King of England William indignantly refused to take the oath of fealty required by Gregory. "I hold my kingdom of God and of my sword," was the stern and decisive answer of the Conqueror. The Papal legate did say something of the worthlessness of gold without obedience, but he took the gold and said no more about the disobedience. One would have liked to see less cunning and more principle, less ruthless disregard of human hearts and human affections and more gentleness and pity in the vicar of incarnate truth and love. "He had a method," says Lagarde, "the military method, with the brutality and savagery which goes with it. For several years he had given proof of this. In 1045 he had been seen passing through the Campagna at the head of a troop of soldiers, and restoring to order the barons who had rebelled against the Pope. Here, moreover, is a fact characteristic of him. The superior of the monastery of Tremiti having a grievance against four of his monks, caused the eyes of three of them to be put out, and the tongue of the fourth to be torn away. He was then ordered to Mount Cassin, and deposed on account of his cruelty. But Hildebrand took up the defence of the accused, who, according to him, had done his duty. He set him at the head of another monastery, and finally gave him a bishopric."<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly Hildebrand was out of sight the greatest man of his age, and he "left the impress of his gigantic character on the ages that succeeded him." But the student of his life feels that while the epithet "great" is fittingly applied to him, the epithet "good" would be inappropriate. The duplicity and craft which he combined with unbending strength of will no doubt suggested to Cardinal Damiani, the man who knew him more intimately than any other, the designation "*Sanctus Satanas*," which in a familiar letter he playfully applied to him. These, too, were the qualities which some of the Reformers had in view when they called him not Hildebrand, but "Höllenbrand"—"Brand of Hell." But history must be just and fair. Whatever is good or high or noble in its leading personages it must recognise ungrudgingly; whatever is bad or unworthy it must condemn.

<sup>1</sup> Lagarde's "Latin Church in the Middle Ages," p. 193.

## CHAPTER IX

### HOW THE PAPAL SUPREMACY TOOK EFFECT IN IRELAND, AND PUT ENGLAND UNDER THE PAPAL BAN

THE policy matured and embodied in concrete measures by Gregory VII. was adopted, and as far as it was possible pursued, by his successors. In the case of his immediate successors the usurpations of the Papacy were frustrated by the strenuous opposition of the Emperor, as well as by the influential anti-Pope, Clement III. It was his next successor but one, Urban II., who in a stirring speech at the Council of Clermont in 1095 enkindled the enthusiasm of his hearers, and set on foot the great series of movements known as the crusades for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre, and Palestine itself, from the grasp of the Saracens—movements the first effect of which was the exaltation of the Papal influence and dignity. By identifying themselves with that singular outbreak of princes and people the Popes secured control and ascendancy over both, and their wealth was enormously increased by estates, property of various kinds, and money committed to their keeping by crusaders who never returned to claim it. Through the influence he acquired as inspirer and leader of the movement, Urban was enabled to place Philip I. of France under the Papal ban for repudiating his lawful wife. He even went so far as to forbid bishops and clergy to swear any kind of feudal homage to the sovereign or any ruler, a measure which if carried out fully would have made co-operation between Church and State impossible. The ultimate effect of the crusades was to undermine and discredit the Papacy, to shake belief in it, and to lessen its influence.

Influence  
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crusades at  
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the Papacy

but ulti-  
mately un-  
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mined and  
discredited  
it.

Frederic  
Barbarossa  
opposes the  
Papal  
claims.

The great-grandson of Henry IV., the renowned Frederic Barbarossa, one of the noblest and grandest figures in mediæval history, was also one of the sturdiest of the anti-papal monarchs (1152—1190). By encouraging the growth of the famous "Free Cities" of Germany, which played such a part in the cause of liberty, he did much to counteract the despotic power of the nobles. He was admired and loved as a second Charlemagne, and like



The contest renewed.

Charlemagne he was idealised by the ages that came after. With him began again that struggle for the mastery between the Papacy and the Hohenstaufen emperors which lasted for a century. The Pope was not more convinced that he sat in the chair of Peter as God's vicar than Frederic was that he too was God's vicegerent, and that his right as Emperor was derived not from the Pope, but immediately from God. He had no idea of yielding for a moment to the Pope's claim of supremacy, *i.e.*, that he ruled by the Pope's sufferance. When Frederic visited Italy the Pope—Hadrian IV. (Nicholas Breakspear), the only Englishman who ever sat in the Papal chair—expected him, according to an old custom, to lead his palfrey, and to hold the stirrup while he mounted or dismounted. At first Frederic refused to submit to the menial office. When he did consent to perform it, the Pope complained that he turned what was meant as a mark of respect into an insult; for Frederic held the left stirrup instead of the right. The Emperor replied that, as he had but small experience in performing the duties of a groom, the mistake was not strange. In a certain letter the Pope referred to what the Papal chair had done for Frederic, specifying among other things the bestowal of the imperial crown, which he called a *beneficium*—a term which in its legal sense meant *fief*, and implied vassalage to the Pope. When the Pope's letter was read in the Diet these expressions caused surprise and indignation; and when the legates attempted to justify them, they were summarily dismissed, whilst the Emperor sent forth a State paper to make his position clear. He called himself "God's anointed, who had received his rule from the Divine source of all authority." "Since our government proceeds through the choice of the princes from God alone, since our Lord at His passion committed the government of the world to two swords, and since Peter gave the precept 'Fear God, and honour the King,' it is evident that whoever says that we received our imperial crown as a *beneficium* from the Pope, contradicts the Divine order, and the doctrine of Peter, and makes himself guilty of a lie."

The Pope called the bestowal of the imperial crown a *beneficium*.

This indignantly resented by Frederic.

During his stay at Rome Frederic insisted on his sovereignty over Rome itself, required the bishops to take the oath of allegiance, and put limits and restrictions on appeals to the Pope. The Pope bitterly complained of these things, and called upon the Emperor to repent and reform his conduct in such matters. In reply the Emperor

avowed his anxiety to be true to all that Christ had taught ; pointed out that the Popes' possessions had been gifts bestowed on them by earthly rulers, and ended thus : " Your Master and mine paid for himself and Peter the tribute-money to Cæsar, and also set the example of right action when he said, ' Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.' " Hadrian was preparing to issue an anathema against the Emperor, when a greater potentate than he, Death, put an end to his anathematising—at least in this world ! The great Emperor was himself drowned in crossing a river in Asia Minor when leading a host of crusaders to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre.

### (1) *In Ireland*

While the events just referred to were occurring in Germany and Italy, the same Pope Hadrian was engaged in active and decided measures to extend his influence and assert his supremacy both in Ireland and in England. In 1155 a document of vast and far-reaching importance had been sought and obtained from Hadrian IV. by the then King of England, Henry II. Hadrian, it should be remembered, was the only Englishman who ever sat in the Papal chair. In the year named Henry held a Council at Winchester to which he first broached the project he had formed to effect the conquest and subjection of Ireland. But such and so far-reaching was the Papal influence at that time that, for the furtherance of his object, Henry, able, powerful, and autocratic ruler though he was, thought it expedient to apply, as he did, through his chaplain, John of Salisbury, for the Pope's sanction to the enterprise. This the Pope gave in a famous Bull, issued by him in that year, 1155, expressly authorising Henry to take possession of Ireland, and bring it into subjection and obedience. The modest claim of the Pope to proprietorship in Ireland, and " all other islands on which the light of the gospel has dawned " is worthy of note : " It is beyond all doubt, as your Highness acknowledgeth, that Ireland, and all the other islands on which the light of the gospel of Christ has dawned . . . do of right belong to St. Peter and the Holy Roman Church." The Bull, as recorded by Giraldus Cambrensis in his *Expugnatio Hiberniæ* or *Conquest of Ireland*, Book II., c. 6, and as given by Archbishop Ussher in his *Veterum Epistolarum Hibernicarum Sylloge*, Epistola XLVI., is rendered into English as follows :—

By a Papal Bull Pope Hadrian authorises Henry II. to take possession of Ireland.

The Papal  
Bull.

“ Hadrian, the bishop, the servant of the servants of God, to his most dearly beloved son in Christ, the illustrious King of England, sends greeting and the apostolical benediction. Your Majesty laudably and profitably considers how you may best promote your glory on earth, and lay up for yourself an eternal reward in heaven, when, as becomes a Catholic prince, you labour to extend the bounds of the Church, to teach the truth of the Christian faith to a rude and unlettered people, and to extirpate the weeds of wickedness from the field of the Lord. To this end you crave the advice and assistance of the Apostolic See, and in so doing, we are persuaded that the higher are your aims, and the more discreet your proceedings, the greater under God will be your success. For those who begin with zeal for the faith and love for religion may always have the best hopes of bringing their undertakings to a prosperous end. It is beyond all doubt, as your Highness acknowledges, that Ireland and all the other islands on which the light of the gospel of Christ has dawned, and which have received the lessons (documenta) of the Christian faith, do of right belong to the blessed Peter and the Holy Roman Church. Wherefore we are the more desirous to sow in them the acceptable seed of God's Word, the more so because we foresee that that will be strictly required of us in the last assize. You have signified to us, our well-beloved son in Christ, that you propose to enter the island of Ireland in order to reduce that people to obedience to the laws, and to root out from among them the weeds of sin ; and that you are willing to pay yearly from every house the pension of one penny to the blessed Peter, and to preserve the rights of the churches of that land complete and inviolate. We therefore, regarding your pious and laudable desire with due favour, and yielding benign assent to your petition, do hereby declare our will and pleasure that for the purpose of enlarging the bounds of the Church, setting restrictions on the progress of evil, for reforming manners, planting virtue, and extending the Christian religion, you do enter that island, and execute therein whatsoever shall be for the honour of God, and the welfare of the land. And, further, let the people of that land receive you with honour, and reverence you as their lord ; the rights of the churches by all means remaining inviolate and unimpaired, and the annual pension of one penny being reserved to the blessed Peter and the Holy Roman Church. If, therefore, you bring what you have conceived in your mind to good prac-

tical effect, study to train and mould that nation in good habits ; and take measures by yourself, as well as by those whom you discern to be fit in conversation and life for this trust, that the Church there may be adorned by them, that the Christian faith may be not only planted but grow and prosper, and whatever pertains to the honour of God and the salvation of souls be so ordered by you that you may receive from God the reward of eternal life, and on earth obtain a glorious name in the ages to come."

Some Irish historians and many Irish politicians have found it a very bitter pill to swallow that the conquest and subjection of Ireland by the English King was expressly authorised and sanctioned by the Pope, and strenuous attempts used to be made to represent the Bull of Hadrian as a forgery ; but these attempts are now abandoned as hopeless. The contemporary evidence attesting its genuineness is absolutely irrefragable.

Attempts to represent the Bull as a forgery now abandoned.

It is attested, as already stated, by Giraldus Cambrensis in his *Conquest of Ireland*, Book II., c. 6, where the Bull is given. Giraldus was not only a contemporary of the Norman conquest of Ireland ; he was closely related by blood to the first conquerors, and made frequent visits to Ireland to consult them. He was nephew of Maurice FitzGerald, ancestor of all the Irish FitzGeralds. He was personally well acquainted with both Henry II. and Pope Hadrian ; had full and frequent access to official documents both in Ireland and at Rome, where he resided for years ; and had no motive for forging the Bull. It would have been more consonant with his feelings doubtless to omit all reference to it. He was in fact eminently qualified to write the history of the Norman conquest of Ireland, and his work *Expugnatio Hiberniæ*, is recognised as the classical history of that conquest. On the death of his uncle, Bishop David FitzGerald, Giraldus, then Archdeacon of Brecknock, was elected by the chapter to succeed him in the bishopric of St. David's, but the King annulled the election, and appointed another. Giraldus appealed to the Pope, and visited Rome several times in connection with the matter.

The evidence for its genuineness strongly irrefragable.

Then the testimony of Giraldus has been amply corroborated. Hadrian's Bull (or *Epistola*, as Ussher calls it) forms Epistle XLVI. in Archbishop Ussher's *Veterum Epistolarum Hibernicarum Sylloge*, and appended to the *Epistola* there is a *recensio* or note by Ussher to prove its authenticity. The archbishop quotes from the

The testimony of Giraldus strongly confirmed.

*Metalogicus*<sup>1</sup> of John of Salisbury, the chaplain of Henry II. and also a very intimate friend of Pope Hadrian, at whose request the Pope sanctioned the English invasion of Ireland, a statement which is absolutely conclusive as to the genuineness of the Bull. John of Salisbury's words are: "It was at my request too that he (Pope Hadrian) granted and gave Ireland to the illustrious King Henry of England, to be kept in possession by hereditary right, as his letters testify to this day. He sent over with me likewise a gold ring, set with an emerald of the choicest description, as a symbol of investiture, for conveying to the Prince the right of governing Ireland, and the said ring has hitherto been ordered to be kept in the archives among the public records of the Court." Ussher then refers to and quotes the annals of Roger of Wendover, and cites passages in support of the Bull from Matthew of Westminster, Matthew of Paris and Nicholas Trivet. The letter of Pope Alexander III., confirming the Bull of Hadrian, immediately follows the letter containing the Bull in Ussher's *Sylloge*. Pope Alexander's letter is *Epistola XLVII.* in the *Sylloge*, and is before me as I write. In support of its authenticity Ussher quotes not only Giraldus Cambrensis, but Roger Hoveden and John Brompton. Then in 1221 Pope Honorius III. wrote to his legate, referring expressly to "the English entry into Ireland by the mandate of the Apostolic See, and its subjugation to the obedience of the Roman Church." This epistle of Honorius forms Letter XLIV. in Theiner's *Vetera Monumenta Hibernorum et Scotorum*. The genuineness of the Bull is accepted by the Roman Catholic historian, Dr. Lanigan ("never did there exist a more real or authentic document," he says), and by Bossuet, Fleury, Döllinger, and indeed by all modern historians worth considering.

It may indeed be said—it has been said—that Hadrian's Bull is not now found among the Vatican archives; but the same remark applies to many other Papal Bulls relating to Ireland all through the reigns of Henry II. and John. They exist in Ussher's *Sylloge*, and in the *Chartæ, Privilegia et Immunitates* published by the Irish Record Office, but the originals are no longer to be found in the Vatican. The reason for their disappearance, and for the doubts thrown on the genuineness of Hadrian's Bull, is obvious. It finds expression in the remonstrance addressed by Donald O'Neill to Pope John XXII. (A.D. 1318), which

<sup>1</sup> Lib. IV., Cap. ult.

complains that "Pope Hadrian, acting on the representation, false and full of iniquity, made to him by Henry II., King of England, and being blinded by his own English prejudices, as, being himself an Englishman, had made over to the English monarch the realm of Ireland, thus bestowing *de facto* upon a sovereign—who for his murder of St. Thomas of Canterbury ought rather to have been deprived of his own kingdom—a kingdom which *de jure* the Pope had no right to bestow, and that this grant was the real source of all the miseries of the country." This letter is described by Professor Richey as "one of the most important documents in our (Irish) history." The original is contained in the *Scotichronicon* of Fordun (*sub anno 1318*). An English translation of it will be found in King's *Primer of the Church History of Ireland*, Vol. III., Appendix XIX.

### (2) *In England*

At the same time, in the reign of the same sovereign, Henry II., the same Pope, Hadrian IV., was engaged in a strenuous effort to establish his supremacy in the Hildebrandian sense in England; and endeavoured to accomplish it through the agency of the famous Thomas à Becket, in whom he found a willing, able, and powerful coadjutor. The story of the conflict between Henry II. and à Becket is one of the most interesting and stirring chapters in English history. Here, only the bare elements of the contest can be stated.

Hadrian seeks to establish a Hildebrandian supremacy in England.

The Church courts established by the Conqueror had the exclusive right of trying clerical offenders; and these courts, when murder was committed by an ecclesiastic—no uncommon occurrence in those times—were unable to inflict capital punishment, or do more than immure the criminal in a monastery. This evil was intensified by the fact that every one who received the tonsure was admitted to the benefit of clergy, and, as many of the clergy who had thus received the tonsure performed no specifically clerical functions beyond those of lawyer, secretary, or clerk, the result was that in the lower ranks of the clergy there was a crowd of needy, turbulent and lawless men, who discharged no clerical functions, and were shielded from the just punishment of their misdeeds by clerical privilege. Henry proposed that such persons when accused of crime should be tried by the ecclesiastical courts, but on conviction should be transferred to the King's court for sentence. à Becket refused to

How the question arose.

The King's claim most reasonable, but à Becket refused to agree to it.

The "Constitutions of Clarendon."

agree to this. The following year a Council was held at Clarendon, near Salisbury, to ascertain and define what the ancient customs of the realm bearing on that and kindred matters were. The statement drawn up by the Council is known in history as the "Constitutions of Clarendon," which in substance were as follows:—That every abbot or bishop was to be elected in the King's chapel, with the King's assent, in the presence of royal officers; and the prelate elected was to do homage to the King before consecration, and to hold his lands as a barony from the King, subject to all feudal burdens. No bishop would be permitted to leave the realm without the King's consent. No tenant-in-chief or royal servant might be excommunicated, or placed under interdict without the assent of the Sovereign. The King's court was to decide whether a suit between an ecclesiastic and a layman should be tried in the ecclesiastical courts, or in those of the King. An appeal was allowed from the court of the archbishop to that of the King, but no one might appeal to the Papal court at Rome except with the King's permission."

à Becket at first refused his sanction, then gave, and afterwards withdrew it.

Called to financial account he felt that this meant his ruin.

A temporary reconciliation.

Henry's rash utterance

leads to the assassination of à Becket.

The primate, Thomas à Becket, at first indignantly refused to give his sanction to these constitutions. He was, however, ultimately prevailed on by his friends to accept of them, and to take the oath of submission; but hardly had he given his consent when he withdrew it, and prepared to fly to the Continent. Summoned to attend a Council at Northampton, an exact and immediate account of the expenditure and receipts of all the bishoprics and abbacies he had administered was demanded from him. He at once recognised that this meant his ruin. In a too obviously theatrical style he now began to pose as a martyr. He fled in disguise to France and laid the case before the Pope, who condemned the "Constitutions," and threatened the King with anathema and interdict. At length a reconciliation was effected, and the primate returned to England; but his first act was to threaten excommunication to all bishops who should submit to the "Constitutions."

Henry II. was a strong, vigorous, and sagacious ruler, but he was subject to fits of unbridled passion. In one of these he exclaimed, "Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" Four knights who heard the exclamation made their way to the primate's palace at Canterbury. They had first an interview with him there. At the urgency of his friends he took refuge in the cathedral, whither they followed and assassinated him. Universal horror was

awakened by the deed, and à Becket was canonised as a martyr by the Pope. Henry disarmed his enemies, and abated the storm that arose against him by repairing to the tomb of à Becket at Canterbury, doing penance there, and making a show of submission to the Pope. The "Constitutions" were in part annulled, but only in form; it was really the King who triumphed. The King's court maintained its jurisdiction over bishops and clergy, and ecclesiastical appointments remained to all intents and purposes in his hands. As to à Becket, there was very little either of the saint or of the true martyr about him. He was a proud, ambitious, quarrelsome, and revengeful man of the world, who had late in life put on the veneer of an ecclesiastic.

It was the King who really triumphed, however.

With Innocent III. (1198—1216) a new era in the history of the Papacy began—a period of about half a century during which the Papal prestige reached its zenith. It was through Innocent himself that its meridian splendour was attained. Innocent was in fact a second Hildebrand. In intellectual gifts and in strength and energy of will he was hardly inferior, if he was inferior, to Hildebrand; in piety and moral temper he was deeper and more spiritual; in learning, culture, and subtlety of mind he surpassed him. His hierarchical pretensions were, if possible, more arrogant than his; but as the circumstances of the time were more favourable he exceeded every other Pope in the greatness of his conquests, and in the grasp with which they were retained. One is simply astounded at the audacious pretensions put forward by him. "The Lord bequeathed to Peter," he said, "not merely the government of the universal Church, but the whole secular estate." He speaks of himself as "less than God, greater than man" (*minor Deo, major homine*), as one who "judges all men, and is judged by no man." "As the sun and the moon are placed in the firmament, the greater as the light of day, and the lesser of the night, so are these two powers in the world—the pontifical, which as having charge of souls is the greater; and the royal, which is the less, and to which the bodies of men are entrusted." He declared that God had ordained the Pope as His vicar, to have power over "all nations and kingdoms, to root up and to pull down, and to destroy, and to build, and to plant"—with daring blasphemy applying to the Papacy the words of God to Jeremiah.

Innocent III. introduces a new era.

A second Hildebrand.

His pretensions.

It was easy to make such claims; it was quite another

Yet he made his



claims effective over Europe.

thing to give them reality and embodiment in action. But Innocent made them operative and effective over broad Europe. All disputes and differences among princes were to be referred to him. Indeed he interposed without being asked, gave his decision, and put an end to the dispute. There was hardly a monarch in Europe, from the most petty to the most powerful potentates on earth, on whom he did not impose his will, "binding their kings with chains, their nobles with fetters of iron." As Hallam says: "He was formidable beyond all his predecessors, perhaps beyond all his successors. On every side the thunder of Rome broke over the heads of rulers"; and the lightning bolt that accompanied the thunder was—

Examples of his power.

excommunication and interdict. He directs the King of Navarre, on pain of spiritual censures, to restore to Richard of England some castles which the former had taken; and by the same means Richard endeavoured to recover the ransom he had paid to the Emperor and the Duke of Austria for his liberation. The great Pontiff requires the Kings of Castile and Portugal to keep the peace on pain of excommunication and interdict. The King of Arragon had debased his coinage, and had thereby created deep dissatisfaction in his realm. The Pope enjoined him to restore it, and restore it he did. He excommunicated Swero for usurping the Crown of Norway. When the King of Hungary ventured to detain the Papal legate, a hint from Innocent to the effect that he might prevent his son's succession to the Crown sufficed to liberate the legate. When the King of Leon married his cousin, a princess of Castile, Innocent placed his kingdom under interdict, and the King sent back his wife. Nor was it enough to fly at small game merely. The greatest potentates in Europe were equally humbled by him. The able and powerful King of France, Philip Augustus, had married Isemburga, a Danish princess, but divorced her, and made another matrimonial alliance. Innocent placed an interdict upon him, which was enforced throughout the whole kingdom. The dead lay unburied, and the living were deprived of the offices of religion, till Philip took back the wife he had divorced. With his action in the case of King John of England the reader is no doubt more familiar.

How he dealt with King John of England.

The archbishopric of Canterbury having become vacant, two candidates were nominated to the see, one, the Bishop of Norwich, the King's treasurer, at the bidding of King John; the other, Reginald, their own superior, by the

Chapter of Canterbury. To the utter astonishment of both King and Chapter the Pope ignored both nominations, and caused some members of the Chapter, then staying at Rome, to elect Stephen Langton, whose appointment was at once confirmed by Innocent. He thus at one stroke superseded and usurped the rights of the English Crown and the rights of the English Church. The King met the Pope's act with defiance, and refused to recognise it. The Pope threatened England with the interdict, if his appointment were not accepted. John retorted that in that case, he would banish the clergy, and mutilate all the Italians in the country. John's threat had no effect on the Pope, who immediately (1208) hurled his thunderbolt. All England was placed under interdict, the King excommunicated, and deposed from his throne, the Pope's ban laid on him, his subjects released from their allegiance, and Philip Augustus (John's enemy and rival) commissioned to invade England, and to carry the sentence into effect. The effect of the interdict was that all Church services ceased, the church doors were locked, and the church bells silent over the land ; all public worship and administration of the sacraments prohibited ; the dead lay unburied, or were buried without the rites of the Church ; and that state of things continued for six years. If you recollect the enormous superstitious value then attached by the great mass of the people to the services of the Church, which to them meant salvation, you may imagine the horror which this state of things produced throughout England. It seemed as if the gates of heaven were closed against them, as if the earth itself had ceased going round. To John it was a very small matter. He answered defiantly by confiscating the lands of the clergy, and had even a malicious pleasure in seizing the goods and lands of those who obeyed the Pope ; and he shut up the churches. But his people became disaffected, and his baronage conspired against him, while the King of France was preparing his army to attack him. It is true that Philip had no great liking for the Pope, and was little inclined to obey his mandate, but he had at least grace to recognise that in this instance it was an imperative duty to obey his spiritual father when obedience might make him King of England as well as King of France.

At one stroke he superseded the rights of the English Crown and the English Church.

All England placed under interdict.

Its effect.

John's baronage conspired against him and his people became disaffected.

Meanwhile, with great astuteness and diplomatic skill John had contrived to form a league with the other great European Powers against France, although they refused to co-operate with him until he was reconciled with the Pope.

John submits to the Pope's terms.

It was in these circumstances that John cynically submitted to the Pope's terms, humiliating though they were, actually surrendered his realm into the hands of Innocent III. and his successors, and received it back again in fief on taking the oath of vassalage and fealty to the Pope as his liege lord, and on engaging to pay an annual tribute of one thousand marks in token thereof.

It need not be said that John was perfidious and treacherous, alike indifferent to the claims of truth and honour. Those who knew him personally said: "Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled by the fouler presence of John." It has been as truly remarked, however, that "the closer study of John's history clears away the charges of incapacity and sloth with which men tried to explain the greatness of his fall. The awful lesson of his life rests on the fact that it was no weak and indolent voluptuary, but the ablest and most ruthless of the Angevins who lost Normandy, became the vassal of the Pope, and perished in a struggle of despair against English freedom" (Green).

But is defeated by the French King,

and his barons were thus enabled to wring from him *Magna Charta*.

Having for his own ends submitted to these humiliations John invaded France with his allies; but the King of France proved victorious; and to Philip's victory on that occasion, strange to say, we owe our English freedom. For from their beaten and crippled King the English barons were enabled to wring that palladium of English liberty, the *Magna Charta*, which among other things guaranteed the rights and liberties of the English Church as against the interference of the Sovereign—*Quod Anglicana ecclesia libera sit, et habeat jura sua integra, et libertates suas illaesas* ("that the English Church may be free, and have her rights unimpaired, and her liberties inviolate").

The Pope's attempt to assert his supremacy damaged it for ever in England.

It is singular, however, that in the very act by which the Pope asserted his ascendancy in England he irreparably impaired it, and that from the moment when John humiliated both himself and his country by submitting to be trampled on by an arrogant and ambitious Italian priest the moral influence of the Papacy began to wane among the English. That one taste of Papal supremacy was enough for free-born Englishmen. Very strenuously did Pope Innocent protest against the *Magna Charta* itself, and again threatened excommunication, but England's eyes had been opened, and her ears had become deaf to the Pope's threats, which were to her henceforth but stage thunder.

## CHAPTER X

### DECLINE OF THE PAPAL POWER

FROM the long struggle of a century's duration between the Popes and the civil rulers the Papacy at length came forth victorious; yet strange to say from that moment of victory its hold on the nations of Europe was relaxed, and its influence and ascendancy began visibly to decline. Agencies and influences had begun to operate that would gradually and certainly undermine it.

From the long contest the Papacy emerged victorious; but from that moment its decadence began.

For one thing, it had raised itself to so great a height that it was not able to support and maintain itself. The safety of a spire, or any other edifice, may be put in jeopardy by its being raised so high that its foundations are not able to uphold it, so that by the force of its own gravity it loses its equilibrium and topples over. Like so many other human structures, the Papacy contained the premonition of its own downfall in the giddy height to which it soared.

1. The height to which it had soared foreshadowed its downfall.

Again, men of insight and discernment like St. Bernard, and, later, Robert Grosseteste, the great Bishop of Lincoln, began to see that the thoroughly worldly, grasping, and anti-Christian spirit which animated it would ultimately be its ruin.

2. Men of insight began to see its true character.

Add to this the rise and growth of powerful nationalities, the deepening conviction in the different nations that they were not mere vassals to the Papal throne, but that each had a life and destiny of its own which it was bound to follow. The policy of Rome was to repress and crush national independence, but the burgeoning, expanding national life in France, in England, in Germany and elsewhere would not be cramped or stamped out.

3. The case of the great nationalities.

The crusades, as we have seen, awakened an enthusiasm which the Popes with much skill turned to their own account. But the crusades in the long run made *against* rather than *for* the Papacy, faith and confidence in which were shaken by its use of the immense wealth put at its disposal; whilst the crusaders were brought into contact with many peoples and new ideas, Eastern and Western, had their horizon greatly widened and their thoughts enlarged,

4. The crusades.

and acquired a knowledge, an intelligence, and a breadth of view which contributed not a little to the awakening of the human mind, and the revolt against the Papal despotism.

5. The rise  
of the  
universities.

The rise of the universities in Europe, and the fresh intellectual life and energy, the greater independence of mind and mental outlook, and the wider range of thought produced by them were no less fatal to the stupendous claims of the Papal hierarchs.

6. The insatiable  
greed of the  
Papacy.

Nor should we overlook the multitudes who suffered from their iron hand, and not least from the ever new methods devised by them of exacting and extracting money or money's worth from the people, among whom discontent was widespread.

Papal  
usurpation.

From the struggle of a century with the Hohenstaufens and others, the Papacy, as we have seen, came forth victorious, and soon began to betray its increased arrogance and insatiable greed by its growing encroachments on the rights of nations and their rulers, as well as of national churches. Chapters were deprived of their rights in connection with the election of bishops. Valuable benefices, higher and lower, were conferred on foreigners by the Pope, and immense exactions, pecuniary and otherwise, were made.

1. In Eng-  
land.

England was found a specially fertile and productive field for such operations. Innocent IV. called it "a garden of delights, a well that never failed"! The Pope nominated foreigners in great numbers, Italians and Frenchmen, to the richest livings in England—men who drew the incomes attached, but never came near their cures. At Salisbury, to give a single case by way of example, the dean, the precentor, the treasurer, the two archdeacons, and twenty-three prebendaries were all foreign Papal nominees. The "Good Parliament" of 1376 declared that the Pope's collector lived in a great palace in London with clerks and offices as if for the receipts of a prince; that the taxes levied by the Pope were five times as great as those levied by the King, and that his revenues from England alone were larger than those of any Prince in Christendom. But in England, as elsewhere, an independent national spirit was deepening and extending, which refused to submit to such exorbitant impositions. The King and the Parliament, the national representatives, and even eminent ecclesiastics like Robert Grosseteste, the great Bishop of Lincoln, set their faces strongly against such audacious invasions of their rights, and in due time passed laws like the statutes of

England's  
attitude.

"Provisors" and "Præmunire," inflicting fines and imprisonment on those guilty of such practices.

In France the Papal usurpations led to a memorable event—the forging of a famous weapon—the issue by Louis IX. in 1268 of an edict known in history as the Pragmatic Sanction, devised to secure exemption from these abuses. This edict, if indeed it be genuine,<sup>1</sup> embraced three valuable provisions: (1) That all prelates and other patrons should enjoy their full rights as to the collation to benefices, according to the Canons; (2) that churches should possess and enjoy their rights of election; and (3) that no tax or pecuniary exaction should be levied by the Pope without the consent of the King and of the national Church.

2. In France.

Pragmatic Sanction of Louis IX.

The Popes, however, continued to claim and assert their right to these usurpations. But the Council of Constance (1415) passed a measure sanctioning the "Gallican liberties," which passed on to the Council of Basel (1432), was inserted in the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges (1438), and under Charles VII. became a law of the State. "From that time," says Lagarde, "the supremacy of the Council over the Pope was an integral part of French legislation<sup>2</sup>; so that, as Lagarde adds: 'From the beginning of the 'Great Schism' until the 'Concordat' of Francis I. the superiority of the Council to the Papacy did not cease to be admitted in France.' Charles VII. was, however, a weak and vacillating ruler. "In 1421 he abolished the ordinances of 1418, and subjected his kingdom to the Papal exactions. He soon afterwards re-established the 'liberties,' which he again suppressed (1425) to re-establish and suppress them once more. For several years he thus oscillated between the 'liberties' and obedience, without being able to attain stability. At length (1438), believing that his throne was confirmed, he made the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges the law of the State, and withdrew the Church of France almost wholly from the jurisdiction of Rome, and assured the triumph of the 'liberties.'"<sup>3</sup>

Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges.

By the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges—(1) a General Council was declared superior to the Pope; (2) episcopal elections were made free of all control; (3) grants and reservations of benefices were abolished; (4) as were also

<sup>1</sup> Even if spurious, as many modern scholars believe (assigning its fabrication to the fifteenth century), Louis IX. of France was undoubtedly a vigorous opponent of the Papal claims to temporal supremacy, and so an early champion of the Gallican liberties:

<sup>2</sup> "The Latin Church in the Middle Ages," pp. 291, 292.

<sup>3</sup> "Ibid.," p. 293.

first fruits. These formed a sort of *Magna Charta*, and secured the famous "liberties and franchises of the Gallican Church." The Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges was repealed, it is true, by Louis XI., but the Gallican spirit was far from dead. The Parliament refused to register its revocation; and it continued more or less operative till Francis I. at the Reformation formed a "Concordat" with Leo. X., with considerable concessions to the Papacy, which for nearly 300 years curtailed the "liberties" of the Gallican Church.

The "Gallican liberties," Hallam points out, depended on two maxims: (1) That the Pope possesses no direct or indirect temporal authority; and (2) that even his spiritual authority can only be exercised in accordance with those parts of the Canon law received and recognised by the French nation.

The changed feeling apparent under Boniface VIII.

His character.

The changed feeling already referred to and the attitude of resistance to the Papal despotism became very apparent under the Pontificate of Boniface VIII. (1294—1303). Boniface was not much behind the other great Popes in strength of will and in general ability; in moral character and in his conception of the spiritual functions of his office he was inferior to most of them. He was believed to have procured by fraud the resignation of his predecessor, Celestine. Reckless arrogance, boundless ambition, rapacious greed of worldly power, wealth and honour, and an idea of the Papal prerogative quite as high as that of Gregory or Innocent, were united with a brazen audacity which they could hardly have matched. And with all his knowledge of the world he seems to have been blind to those new intellectual, social, and national forces which had begun to transform European society, and to create an insuperable bar to the Papal demands. He failed to make his claims effective both in England and in France.

Frustrated by Edward I. of England,

Edward I. of England was a strong, vigilant, and politic King, who has been called "the English Justinian." In sheer want of money for the wars in which he was engaged, he laid a tax on the incomes of the clergy. Thereupon Boniface issued his famous Bull *Clericis laicos*, which forbade sovereigns to tax the clergy, and forbade the clergy to pay the taxes. His aim was to sever the property of the Church from all secular obligations, and to constitute himself the sole trustee of all property held by the clergy, the monasteries, and even the universities. The clergy chose to obey the Papal mandates; but Edward outlawed the

whole of them, and brought them to their knees. Boniface interposed also between Edward and Scotland, claiming that the Scottish kingdom belonged in full right to the Papal see, but Edward treated the impudent pretension with scant courtesy and the claim came to nothing.

Nor was Boniface more successful in his contest with Philip, the King of France, when he also laid a tax upon the French clergy. The Pope forbade the payment of it, but Philip replied by prohibiting any money being taken from his realm. Later Boniface issued several Bulls charging the French King and people with various offences, and declaring the King to be subject to him in temporal as in spiritual affairs ; but a States-General—the first of the kind—composed of the nobles, the clergy, and the people, denied the temporal authority of the Pope, and upheld Philip in the course which he had taken. The Pope then hurled his final bolt in the Bull "*Unam sanctam*," with its claim both to institute and to judge the civil power. At length an armed force was raised in Italy by French gold, which seized the Pope, dragged him from his throne and palace at Anagni, paraded him through the streets on a horse with his face towards its tail, and threw him into prison. Though he was rescued from the prison, the treatment to which he had been exposed brought on a fever, which ended in his death. In the circumstances in which he died men saw a fulfilment of the prophecy of the predecessor he had displaced, that "having ascended the Papal throne like a fox, he would rule like a lion, and die like a dog." It is certain that the Papal power and influence now declined more rapidly than ever.

and by  
Philip, King  
of France.

There were two periods especially, both of considerable duration, which did much to accelerate that decay.

Two periods  
hasten the  
decay of  
the Papacy.

The first of these is what is known as the period of "the Babylonish Captivity" of the Church. The successor of Boniface survived only a few months. On his death, Philip, the French King, took care that a Pope should be chosen who would carry out his policy. That Pope was a Frenchman, Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux, who assumed the title of Clement V. After a short residence at Bordeaux, and then at Poitiers, he took the singular step of removing the seat of the Papal throne to Avignon, which, although not in French territory, but belonging to the kingdom of Naples, was surrounded by French territory, and put the Pope at the mercy of the French king and in servile dependence on him. For a

1. "The  
Babylonish  
Captivity."



period of seventy years and more Avignon was the seat of the Papal court—a period which, both on account of the number of years which it lasted, and the abjectly dependent condition of the Popes, has been called by Roman Catholic historians by the title I have named—"the Babylonish Captivity." Seven successive Popes reigned there, all Frenchmen. The vast and gloomy palace in which they resided, an abode of ugliness and gloom, still exists, but is now, or was some time ago, employed as a soldiers' barrack, filled with iron cots, arms, and accoutrements.

Many  
causes now  
hastened  
its decay.

It was in many ways and through a variety of causes a time of rapid decay in the Papacy. The immense prestige and splendid associations connected with the great and ancient capital on the Tiber were lost. The Pope being French, and the College of Cardinals being predominantly French, and dependent on the French Court, they could no longer claim to be independent judges in the affairs of Christendom. And the morals of the Papal Court at Avignon are said to have been far from what they should have been. Petrarch, who made one of a deputation from Rome to Pope Clement VI., beseeching his return, gives an exceedingly dark picture of the state of things there. He calls it "the sink of Christendom." "Whatever you have read of the gates of hell," he says, "will apply to that place." At length the threat of the Romans to elect an anti-Pope determined Gregory XI. to return to the ancient capital in 1377.

2. "The  
Great  
Schism of  
the West."

But the period of the "Babylonish Captivity" had hardly ended when another period, growing out of it, began, which did more even than the "captivity" of Avignon to degrade the Papacy, and rob it of its glamour in the eyes of men. This was what is known as "the Great Schism of the West." During the Avignon period two parties had emerged in the College of Cardinals—a French party devoted to the interests of France and the French king; and an Italian party, who wished to liberate the Pope from the influence of the French monarch. On the death of Gregory XI., already named, the struggle began between them, that is, between France and Italy, for the possession of the Papacy. An Italian was chosen; but the French cardinals withdrew, and elected a Pope of their own, who once more set up his Court at Avignon. For nearly half a century (1378—1409) Latin Christendom continued divided into two hostile camps, each with a Pope of its own, each excommunicating and anathematising the other; so

that, although Boniface VIII. had declared that "it is altogether necessary for salvation for every human being to be subject to the successor of Peter," no human being during that long period could tell with certainty which of the two Popes, if either of them, was Peter's successor.

And, although the breach was at length healed, the Papacy did nothing to recover its prestige, but as the fifteenth century proceeded became more and more degraded. Take the Popes from Paul II. to Leo X. (1464—1521)—they were as a rule evil men, most of them steeped in gross immorality. Alexander VI. (Roderic Borgia) is probably unequalled in iniquity and profligacy except by his son, Cæsar Borgia. Besides the influences already indicated as inimical to the Papal claims, a great middle class, more highly educated, and more intelligent, was rising into power, growing more and more impatient of its bondage. Satirists and poets had begun with great freedom to lash and scorch it with their ridicule, and to compare its infamies and scandals with its pretensions. A strong undercurrent had begun to flow against it, tending to undermine the huge structure of so many centuries, preparing the way for Luther, and making his success possible. Here then we have reached a point where our rapid sketch of the evolution of the Papacy may end.

As the fifteenth century proceeded the Papacy became more and more degraded.

As we recall the main facts of the singular story just concluded there are certain astounding phenomena which stand out, lurid and repellent but persistent, before the memory.

Some noteworthy facts in its history.

1. One of these is the extent to which the huge structure of the Papacy was based on pure fiction, and buttressed and sustained by systematic and bare-faced forgery and fraud. Its starting-point and genesis are found in an Ebionite fiction first broached in the so-called Clementine Homilies. It is in this heretical and unhistorical romance, appearing towards the end of the second century, that we first hear of the Roman episcopate and Primacy of Peter, on which (a worse than sandy foundation) the whole mediæval Papacy is based; and the Ebionite fiction is soon appropriated and adopted by the "Catholic" Church. Later, the passage in Matt. xvi. 18, "On this rock will I build my church," etc., is perverted so as to suit this theory, although the alleged Primacy of Peter is contradicted, as we have seen, by his whole history as recorded in the New Testament, and by the fact that the same power as that conferred on Peter is extended to all the apostles, and to the whole Church; and the fictions of Peter's twenty-five years

1. Based on fiction and sustained by forgery and fraud.

épiscopate of Rome, and of the transmission of supreme authority to his successors, are devised in support of it, although there is nothing in history more certain than that, long after Peter's time, the rulers of the Roman Church were presbyter-bishops, and that there was not one but a plurality of them. By another forgery Constantine is represented as giving to Pope Sylvester and his successors the temporal sovereignty of Rome, and of certain territories in Italy, thus antedating the temporal power of the Pope by many centuries. Of a similar character was the fraudulent misrepresentation of a Canon of the Council of Nicæa; the palming off of a Canon of the Council of Sardica as a canon of the Œcumenical Council of Nicæa; the cunning, wholesale, and outrageous interpolation and falsification of the writings of Cyprian in the interest of the Papal aggrandisement; and the colossal forgery of the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, on which the Popes Nicholas I. and Gregory VII. founded their stupendous pretensions. "The passage from the Catholicism of the Fathers to that of the modern Popes was accomplished by wilful falsehood; and the whole structure of traditions, laws, and doctrines that support the theory of infallibility, and the practica despotism of the Popes, stands on a basis of fraud."<sup>1</sup>

Claims of  
the moral  
law set at  
nought by  
Popes and  
clergy.

And as from the first the Papal claims were based on falsehood and sustained by it, so Popes and clergy, in order to gain their ends, habitually set not only veracity but the other requirements of the moral law at about the same value as the modern German. "The clergy, in the interests of the Papal cause, encourage violations of the most sacred natural rights and duties. Mathilda's clerical partisans stimulate Conrad's rebellion against his father, and Pope Urban does not frown on an evil act which promises the alliance of Italy with the Papacy. Henry V. is absolved by Pope Paschal from his filial obligations, and from the most solemn oath to his father, and the rupture between father and son is blasphemously ascribed by the Pope to the inspiration of God. Paschal does not hesitate to break the formal treaty in which he has conceded to the German Emperor the right of investiture." We cannot forget how Gregory the Great not only connived at the atrocious murder of Maurice and his Empress, with their six sons and three daughters, but hastened to congratulate the blood-stained assassin, and to call on heaven and earth to exult at his accession; nor how Gregory VII. violated truth and

<sup>1</sup> Lord Acton, in *North British Review*, for October, 1869, p. 130.

honour in his dealings with Henry IV., caused several sanguinary wars, and sacrificed many thousands of lives by his cunning silence and double dealing; nor how Innocent III. had recourse to falsehood and treachery in his relations with Raymond of Toulouse; nor, when Simon de Montfort coveted Raymond's territory and took possession of it, how the fourth Lateran Council confirmed the robbery. As Dean Milman remarks: "So completely was the churchman's interest to absorb all others that crimes against nature not only were excused by the ordinary passions of men, but even so in the case of those of the highest pretensions to holiness."

The salt having lost its savour, wherewith was it to be salted? They who ought to have been the light of Europe became a mere "will-o'-the-wisp," a mere *ignis fatuus*. They who ought to have been first became last, a warning to men and nations as well as churches that on truth and virtue depends the only abiding strength. So when the time was ripe the enlightened, enfranchised intellect of Europe appealed from its false guides to God and to God's world of facts, and once for all emancipated itself.

2. It must have struck those who have followed our story that no claim once made by the Papacy was ever revoked. No pretension, however absurd or however based on fiction or supported by falsehood, once deliberately affirmed was ever renounced, but always maintained in its completeness, and made a stepping-stone to still higher claims. It cannot be too distinctly remembered that the doctrine of the Papal supremacy, developed and consummated under Gregory VII. and Innocent III., is at this moment held by Rome in all its arrogance and fulness. The late Cardinal Manning, for example, endorsed in all its parts the famous Bull, "*Unam sanctam*" of Boniface VIII., expressing the claim to supremacy over both Church and State, over both kings and their subjects, in its most extreme form, and declared it to be still in force. Nay, the principles of the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals affirming the absolute supremacy of the Pope, and the arrogant and impudent assumptions of Gregory VII., Innocent III. and Boniface VIII., claiming supremacy over both the spiritual and the secular realms, over both Church and State, are repeated and reaffirmed by the Vatican Council, and practically reproduced in the propositions of the famous, or rather notorious, "*Syllabus*."

2. No claim once made was ever revoked.

3. It must have been obvious, too, in the course of the

3. The evolution of the

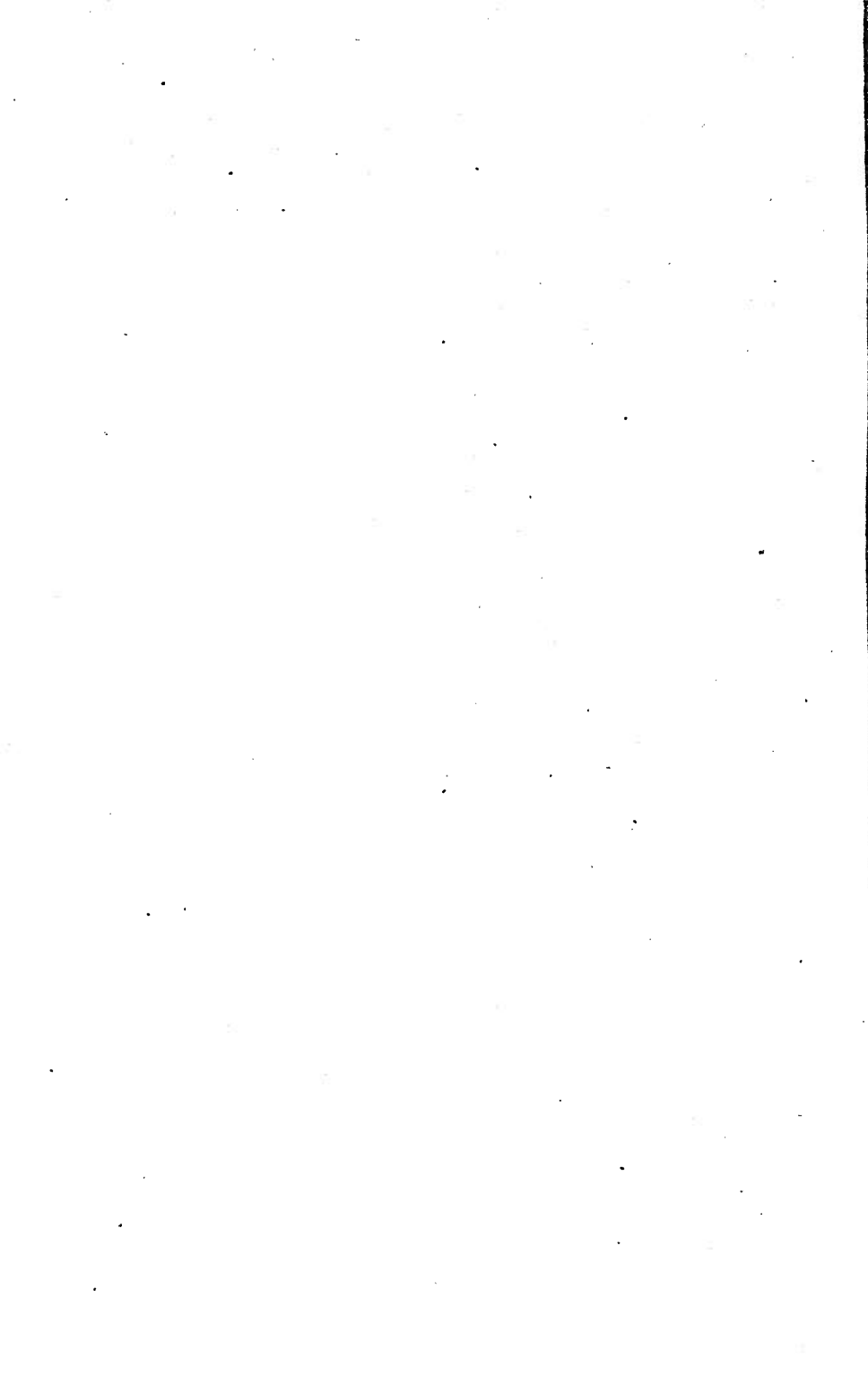
Papal power was the rise and progress of a worldly principle in the Church.

narrative I have given that the evolution of the Papal power was largely a history of the rise and progress of a worldly principle within the Church. When, stimulated by the fiction of Peter's Roman episcopate and Primacy, the Roman bishops proceeded first to claim supremacy over the whole Church, and then over the world and its rulers as well, it was a claim of "lordship over God's heritage" which Peter expressly denounces, and which our Lord Himself had condemned as a fruit of worldly ambition. When we see that the one thing beyond all others which successive Popes are careful to conserve and guard is their own increasingly arrogant authority, our conviction deepens with regard to the secular and worldly spirit which animates them. As has been said by a well-informed and competent historian: "The Church Empire which we call the Papacy was essentially and intensely secular, quite as much so as the Empire of the Cæsars. It was religious chiefly as a means of secular acquisition. Religion was its second business, not its first. The Pope's legates penetrated to the cabinets of kings, and sought to manipulate their civil policy. The Pope claimed the right to enthrone and dethrone kings, and emperors must hold his stirrup and kiss his foot. Armies of knights and infantry moved at his summons to subdue refractory provinces, and orders of priestly soldiers in mail marched at his bidding against the strongholds of the East. Feudalism was taken up into Papal imperialism, and utilised for its aggrandisement. Knights and barons and petty princes held their possessions by his investiture, and swore fealty to their feudal lord."

4. A natural fruit of the spirit that animated it were the moral evils that disgraced its history.

4. Finally, as an inevitable fruit and consequence of the spirit that animated it appeared the huge *moral evils* that so often degraded and disgraced its history. Is it not profoundly significant that in all the broad and voluminous pages of history there is no better opportunity of seeing human nature at its worst, or in its most loathsome and repulsive phases, than in the history of the Popes of Rome? In the personal history of the Popes you will find every species of iniquity, especially will you see it in its meanest and grossest forms. Lying, trickery, chicanery, artifice, hideous injustice, oppression, cruelty; pitiless despotism, and yet the meanness that truckles to the strong; grasping avarice, boundless unscrupulousness, and untruthfulness—these are but a few of the evil fruits borne by it. And is it any wonder that we have even worse than these—that for

long periods we have Popes wallowing in the mire of indescribable debaucheries, spiced by assassination and murder? "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, any more than a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit." It was inevitable that the arrogant worldly spirit at the very heart and centre of the Papacy should bear its appropriate fruit, and bring its natural penalties—that the "vaulting ambition" that inspired and animated it should "o'er-leap itself and fall on the other side."



## **BOOK II**

### **THE SACRAMENTS TRANSFORMED**





## CHAPTER XI

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM IN THE LATIN CHURCH

It is necessary to begin our study here as in other instances by noting carefully the New Testament teaching with regard to Christian baptism. And specially worthy of notice at the outset are *the antecedent conditions* required from candidates for the rite as these are specified in Scripture.

The antecedent conditions of baptism as specified in the New Testament.

1. The words of institution by our Lord Himself we have in two forms: (a) Matt. xxviii. 19: "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them, etc." Mark xvi. 15, 16: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." It is true that verses 9 to 20—the closing verses of St. Mark's Gospel—are excluded from the text by Westcott and Hort, and the best textual critics. The weight of MS. authority is against them. They are indeed quoted by Irenæus, and are supposed to have been appended to the Gospel soon after the end of the apostolic age. We have given verses 15 and 16 here because the passage is contained in the Vulgate, which Rome has endorsed as authoritative. Observe that they make faith in Christ an antecedent pre-requisite of baptism.

1. The words of institution in Mark make *faith* an antecedent.

2. When on the day of Pentecost the multitudes addressed by St. Peter exclaimed, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."<sup>1</sup> It is added, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptised." His "word" had just declared that "God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ." "Receiving his word" thus clearly implied faith in Jesus as Messiah; and indeed they are immediately described as "all that be-

2. St. Peter makes both repentance and faith antecedent it.

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 38.

lieved." The antecedent conditions in their case were thus *repentance* and *faith*.

3. In the account of Philip's practice faith precedes it.

3. On Philip's preaching to the people of Samaria it is said, "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women. Then Simon [Magus] himself believed also: and when he was baptised, he continued with Philip, etc."<sup>1</sup> Here again observe, it was *after they had believed* or professed faith in Christ that they were baptised.

4. So again in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch.

4. After Philip had "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian eunuch, the latter said: "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptised? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then Philip baptised him. It is true here again that the words of verse 37 just quoted are wanting in all the best MSS. and in many versions. The abruptness and apparent brokenness of the sentences without them led doubtless to their insertion. They, too, are quoted by Irenæus, so that they had found their way into the text early. I give the words here because they also are contained in the Vulgate. We have already seen (verses 12, 13) that it was Philip's custom to observe the order—faith in Christ first, then baptism.

5. Cornelius had believed and received the Holy Ghost before Peter baptised him.

5. If ever there was an earnest believer it was Cornelius, the centurion, at Cæsarea.<sup>2</sup> As Philip did to the Ethiopian Court official, so now Peter "preached Jesus" to Cornelius, saying: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."<sup>3</sup> But, observe, Cornelius had believed, and believing he had "received remission of sins," and the Holy Ghost had fallen on him, *before* he was baptised. Hence Peter's question: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

6. In St. Paul's baptism of the Philippiian jailer faith precedes the administration of the rite.

6. "What must I do to be saved?" cried the keeper of the prison at Philippi. "And they" [Paul and Silas] "said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house . . . and he was baptised, he and all his, straightway. And

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Acts x. 1-4; 33.

<sup>3</sup> Acts x. 43, 44.

when he had brought them into his house he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."<sup>1</sup> Here again faith in the Lord Jesus Christ appears as the antecedent condition both of salvation and of baptism.

7. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians believed, and were baptised."<sup>2</sup> It is thus taken as a matter of course, and as a recognised rule, that faith in Christ should precede baptism.

7. So in the baptism by St. Paul of Crispus and all his house, and of many Corinthians.

8. The apostle Paul, coming to Ephesus, finds "certain disciples" to whom he puts the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Note, they are "disciples," who have already "believed." "And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptised? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied."<sup>3</sup> But here, once more, faith comes before baptism, not after it.

8. "Certain disciples" at Ephesus had believed before they were baptised by the apostle.

Thus, then, a profession of repentance and faith—"repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"—is expressly specified in Scripture as an antecedent condition of baptism.

Now faith is a fruit of regeneration. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God";<sup>4</sup> "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."<sup>5</sup> Every true believer in Christ is thus born of God. And remember in this connection the blessings that faith secures. All the blessings included in the words "salvation," "eternal life," are assured to him who believes. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."<sup>6</sup> "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have

But faith is a fruit of regeneration.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 30—34.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xviii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xix. 1—6.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John v. 1.

<sup>5</sup> John i. 12, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Acts xvi. 31.

everlasting life." <sup>1</sup> When a man believes in Christ he is "justified," and justification includes forgiveness. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law." <sup>2</sup> "To him gave all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." <sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that these last words were spoken to Cornelius just before he was baptised. Immediately before the administration of the rite of baptism, Peter told him that, not by means of baptism, but "through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

The death of Christ the efficient cause of salvation.

Of course the efficient cause of all these blessings is the death of Christ, the blood of Christ, "which cleanseth from all sin." <sup>4</sup> "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." <sup>5</sup> We are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood"; <sup>6</sup> *faith* being the hand by which we appropriate the great blessings of His redemption.

Repentance but an aspect of regeneration.

As to "repentance" (*μετάνοια*) it is regeneration, or the effect of it rather, viewed on the human side, and as it appears in personal experience.

The penitent believer is thus regenerate before baptism.

The person, then, who has "repentance" and "faith"—the antecedent conditions of baptism—is already regenerate, and his sins remitted prior to baptism. Wherever the profession of repentance and faith is genuine, regeneration and forgiveness *precede* baptism and cannot be *the effect* of it. What, then, is the relation of baptism to these great blessings? It is not only a sign and symbol of them, it is, as a seal of the covenant of grace, an attestation and assurance that the great benefits which it symbolises shall be enjoyed by all who repent and believe—not necessarily by all who are baptised, for many may be baptised where there is neither faith nor repentance. We are sanctified by the truth; but not every one who reads or hears the truth is sanctified by it. By the incorruptible seed of the word men are born again, but not every one who reads or hears the word is born thereby. So not every one who is baptised is thereby regenerated. Simon Magus was baptised,<sup>7</sup>

Baptism a sign, symbol and seal.

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Acts x. 43.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John i. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. i. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. iii. 24, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Acts viii. 13.

but is declared by Peter to be still "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," is told by him that "his heart is not right with God," that he "has neither part nor lot in this matter," while he is exhorted to repent of his wickedness and to pray for pardon.<sup>1</sup> Vast multitudes in these countries who were baptised prove by their lives that they are not regenerated. What is the value of a "regeneration" which is practically futile, which is followed by a worldly, godless and wicked life? But although all who are baptised are not regenerated or saved, the reformed churches have declared baptism to be a valuable means of grace, which is not to be neglected or treated with indifference. As Calvin puts the matter, "God does not mock us with empty signs, but by His power inwardly makes good what He demonstrates by the outward sign. We must connect the sign and the thing signified so as not to make the sign empty and ineffectual; yet not to honour the sign so as to detract from the Holy Spirit what is peculiarly His." Hence in their simple, childlike faith the early Christians supposed the thing signified to accompany the sign, and attributed the same terms and effects—"regeneration" and "remission of sins"—to both, without discriminating between them, yet without intending to convey that the mere sign effected the change. It is important to remember that by the figure of metonymy we naturally and inevitably attribute to symbols the properties and effects which in strictness belong to the things which they signify. It is a peculiarity of language which attaches necessarily to the use of figure and symbol.

There are, however, two passages of Scripture in particular which are constantly and confidently appealed to in support of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and to these we must now turn for a little.

The first of these is found in John iii. 5. Jesus had said to Nicodemus that "except a man be born again he could not see the kingdom of God." This reference to a new or second birth puzzled Nicodemus, whose perplexity found expression in the question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" To which Jesus replied: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."<sup>2</sup> That is, our Lord further elucidated His meaning to His questioner by a reference to being "born of water." It is contended by some expositors that in the phrase "born of water" there is a reference

Does the phrase in John iii. 5, "born of water," refer to baptism?

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 5.

The phrase refers to something familiar to Nicodemus — the Jewish symbolical use of water ;

to Christian baptism, which, remember, was not instituted till long afterwards, of which, therefore, Nicodemus could know nothing, a reference to which, instead of conveying any light to his mind, would only puzzle him still more. It would have been a treatment of this earnest and anxious inquirer very unlike that customary to Him who was not given to break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. In the new phrase, "born of water," *the reference was clearly to something with which Nicodemus was familiar*, and which would serve to direct his mind to what Jesus meant to emphasise. Now, nothing was more familiar to him than the symbolical use of water in the Jewish ceremonial. Aaron and his sons had to be washed with water at the door of the tabernacle before putting on their priestly garments.<sup>1</sup> A large laver of brass was placed between the tabernacle and the altar on which expiation was made, and in that laver the priests had always to wash before going near the altar to minister before the Lord.<sup>2</sup> In like manner, the people on various occasions had to undergo ceremonial cleansing.<sup>3</sup> This symbolism entered into their religious, and even their daily lives, and became interwoven with their religious speech. These ceremonial lustrations symbolised and suggested the spiritual and moral cleansing which they needed, but *did not of course effect that moral purification and renovation*. See here the point of Christ's reference to being "born of water." What the phrase was fitted to convey to Nicodemus was that something more was necessary than to be "born of water," that what was imperatively required was that a man must be "born of the Spirit" before he could enter into the kingdom of God. Hence, when the phrase is repeated, as it is twice in the verses that follow (verses 6, 8), the reference to "water" is significantly omitted.

or the water of John the Baptist ; or both.

It is quite possible, also, that the phrase "born of water" might direct the mind of Nicodemus to the practice of John the Baptist. "I am come baptising with water" (John is represented as saying in the first chapter of this Gospel), "but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost."<sup>4</sup> It cannot be too carefully observed that "*water-baptism*" and "*the baptism of the Holy Ghost*" are not only distinguished from one another,

"Water-baptism" and the "baptism of the Holy Ghost" distinguished and contrasted.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxix. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxx. 18, 19, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Num. xix. 7-20 ; Mark vii. 2-4 ; Heb. ix. 10. <sup>4</sup> John i. 31-33.

but *contrasted*. Accordingly many expositors naturally see in this contrast between the water-baptism of John and Christ's baptism with the Holy Ghost, in the first chapter, the keynote to the meaning of the phrase "born of water" in the third chapter. John's baptism was called "the baptism of repentance";<sup>1</sup> on which Dr. Plummer says, "Repentance-baptism is baptism connected with repentance, as being an external symbol of the inward change. The repentance precedes the baptism, which seals it, and reminds the baptised of his new obligation. John's repentance-baptism was εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. This was its purpose, assuring the penitent of forgiveness."<sup>2</sup> [When Peter says on the day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," Dr. Plummer's words apply with equal appropriateness: "Peter's baptism was εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. This was its purpose, assuring the penitent of forgiveness."] It was held by the Fathers generally that there was no regenerating efficacy in the water-baptism of John; and the Council of Trent has endorsed that view in its decrees. So Jesus says in effect to Nicodemus: "You are familiar with the water-lustrations of the Jewish ceremonial, and with the water-baptism of John. These were merely symbolical of spiritual cleansing and renewal, and suggested the need of them, but did not themselves regenerate, or make those who underwent them perfect. To be really 'regenerated' you must undergo not the ceremonial and symbolical washing with water only, you must be 'born of the Spirit.'" Properly understood thus the words of John iii. 5 have no reference to the rite of Christian baptism, and teach and emphasise the very opposite of what is understood by the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration."

No re-generating efficacy in the "water-baptism" of John.

The other passage adduced in support of this doctrine is that in Titus iii. 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Now the most simple and natural as well as the best exegesis we have seen of the clause "the washing of regeneration" is one of the latest—that of Dr. Newport J. D. White in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*. He takes "washing," not "laver," to be the correct and proper rendering of λουτρόν, and regards παλιγγενεσίας ("of

Does Titus iii. 5 teach baptismal regeneration?

λουτρόν means not "laver," but "washing."

<sup>1</sup> Luke iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> "International Critical Commentary" on Luke iii. 3.



Dr. Armitage  
Robinson  
proves this.

regeneration") as "defining the nature of the λουτρόν—not any λουτρόν whatever [he says], but that of the new birth." Dr. White also refers to a note of Dean Armitage Robinson on Eph. v. 26, in his commentary on that epistle, as determining the sense of λουτρόν. Dr. Robinson says: "Three allied words must be distinguished: (1) λουτρόν, 'the water for washing,' or 'the washing' itself; (2) λουτρόν, 'the place of washing'; (3) λουτήρ, 'the vessel for washing,' 'the laver.'" By detailed references to the use of the words in Plutarch, in the Septuagint, and in the Patristic writings, he shows that λουτήρ is the word invariably used for "laver," and that λουτρόν is the word for "washing." Referring to Titus iii. 5, he says: "Both there and here [Eph. v. 26] the authorised version correctly renders λουτρόν 'the washing': 'the laver' is incorrect, and has been probably suggested by the Latin 'lavacro,' which has been misunderstood." In the clause "the washing of regeneration," then, according to Dr. Newport White, the words "of regeneration" "define the nature of the washing"; so that the whole phrase simply means "the washing which is regeneration." Regeneration is described, that is, under the figure of a washing. There are two kinds of washing—the external and symbolical with water; the inward and spiritual by the Holy Spirit. It is the latter that is referred to here, so that it seems superfluous to assume a reference to the rite of baptism.

The relation of  
regeneration and  
forgiveness  
to baptism.

But supposing that there is an implicit reference to baptism, as undoubtedly there is a reference in Eph. v. 26, the question still remains, What is the relation between the two—between the water-baptism and regeneration? It is admitted on all hands that the efficient agent in regeneration is the Holy Spirit, and that the efficient cause of forgiveness is the blood of Christ. We have seen, moreover, that repentance and faith, the antecedent conditions of adult baptism in the New Testament, involve regeneration, and have already secured remission of sins. It is obvious, then, that these great blessings are not effected or secured by the rite of baptism: they are already possessed by the penitent believer prior to baptism. What, then, is their precise relation to water-baptism? Baptism is a sign and symbol of them. But more than that, baptism as a seal of the covenant of grace is a Divine pledge and attestation of them, assuring the penitent believer that these blessings are his. Still more, as the Reformed symbols are practically unanimous in teaching, baptism as a Divine ordinance is

an important means of grace, although the grace conveyed thereby is not due to any virtue inherent in the sacrament itself, for it is God alone who acts on us through His Spirit, through faith on the part of those baptised, and through earnest prayer on the part of all concerned. In his comment on Eph. v. 26 Calvin says that "God employs baptism for declaring to us that we are washed, and at the same time performs what it represents." But he adds that "we must beware of ascribing to the sign or to the minister what belongs to God alone." We must not imagine "that water cleanses the pollutions of the soul, which nothing but the blood of Christ can accomplish. The true and proper use of the sacrament is to lead us directly to Christ, and to place all our dependence on Him." Besides, "the apostle does not say that it is the sign which washes, but declares it to be exclusively the work of God. It is God who washes, and the honour of performing it cannot be lawfully taken from its author and given to the sign," although He "employs the sign for declaring to us that we are washed." Nothing, therefore, could be more at variance with the whole tenor of New Testament teaching on this subject than to affirm, as the Council of Trent does in its decrees, that the rite of baptism effects regeneration, etc., *ex opere operato*—a virtual endorsement of that magical conception of the rite which came originally from paganism.

Calvin's  
explanation.

A period of obscurity lies between the close of the apostolic era and the earliest references to the rite outside that era which occur in the second century. In the opening pages of this chapter you will have noticed that in the passages quoted (Acts ii. 38 ; viii. 12, 13, 36, 37 ; x. 43, 44 ; xvi. 30—34 ; xviii. 18 ; xix. 1—6) either *faith* or *repentance*, or *both*, are made by the great teachers Peter, John, Philip and Paul *antecedent conditions* of baptism, which a candidate for baptism must possess in order to admission to the rite. That is the fundamental apostolic teaching on this subject. "Paul was the first," says Harnack, "and almost the last"—although this is not quite fair to Peter and Philip—"with whom sacramental theology was really held in check by clear ideas, and strictly spiritual considerations. After him the floodgates were opened, and in poured the mysteries and their lore." More than a century has now passed since Pentecost, but note the change—the relation between *baptism* on the one hand and *faith* and *repentance* on the other is entirely inverted. Instead of being *antecedent* to baptism they are, in Hermas and

Baptism  
after the  
age of the  
apostles.

Hermas.

Justin  
Martyr.

others, its *consequence*. "The seal is the water; they descend into the water dead, and arise alive"; life being the effect of baptism. The teaching of Justin is practically the same, when he says of those about to be baptised, "they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated, and obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed."<sup>1</sup> It is indeed difficult to say whether he is attributing to the baptismal water a magical effect, or whether more spiritual ideas underlie language which may be more or less symbolical. In the case of Justin, he can hardly intend that the mere water-baptism is the agent of renewal, for he describes the person about to be baptised as having believed already, and as having been "made new through Christ," and other statements of his suggest that in the words just quoted he may have been indulging somewhat freely in the figure of metonymy. He says in another place: "Isaiah did not send you to a bath, there to wash away murder and other sins, which not even all the sea were sufficient to purge; but, as might have been expected, this was that saving bath of the olden time which was for those who repented, and who no longer were purified by the blood of goats, and of sheep, or by the ashes of an heifer, or by the offerings of fine flour, but by faith through the blood of Christ, and through His death, Who died for this very reason."<sup>2</sup>

Startling to  
find pagan  
mystery-  
names ap-  
plied to  
baptism.

Certain it is, however, that already, and from this time forward, the symbolical has become the mysterious and the magical. In Justin himself the effect of the heathen mystery-cults is already apparent; and "neither fancy nor reflection can long continue in a vacuum of mystery."

It is deeply significant and rather startling to find names which are peculiar to the pagan mysteries applied to baptism such as *φωτισμός* (illumination) in Justin himself<sup>3</sup>—a name "which came straight from the Greek mysteries"; or again, the word "seal" (*σφραγίς*), which was common to the mysteries and to some foreign cults, and which occurs in *Hermas*,<sup>4</sup> and in 2 *Clement*, 7, 8; and the word "mystery" itself, which is also applied to baptism, with a whole series of terms related to it, as *μύησις* (initiation); *τελείωσις* (being not only initiated, but matured and perfected in the mysteries); *μυσταγωγός*

<sup>1</sup> "First Apol.," 61.

<sup>2</sup> Justin, "Dial. with Trypho.," Chap. XII.

<sup>3</sup> "First Apol.," 61.

<sup>4</sup> Simil. IX., 16.

(one who initiates into the mysteries)—all these terms, and many more, drawn direct from the heathen mystery-cults, were soon familiar as household words in the Christian vocabulary. "In this terminology," says Hatch, "we can more easily trace the influence of the mysteries than that of the New Testament."

And the strictly pagan idea that matter has a mysterious and magical influence on the spirit, brought over by thousands of heathen converts along with their pagan culture, was profoundly operative in the Church. The psychological climate of the second century was everywhere impregnated with it. Hatch has shown how prevalent the stoical pantheistical conception was that "matter and spirit are only varying forms of a single substance."<sup>1</sup>

The pagan idea that matter has a magical influence on spirit, brought over by heathen converts.

Mind is only a subtle form of body. So water, when exorcised from the demonic and evil influences which reside in it, will cleanse the soul spiritually. Tertullian's treatise on Baptism is based on this idea. By a series of fantastic arguments, such as that about the spirit brooding on the face of the waters, and that "the waters were the first to receive the precept 'to bring forth living creatures,'" he proves to his own satisfaction a special affinity to exist between water and the Holy Spirit, and that, after being duly exorcised and consecrated, the water "imbibes at the same time the power of sanctifying," so that "since we are defiled by sin, as it were by dirt, it is fitting we should be washed from those stains in water"; and "after the waters have been in a manner indued with medicinal virtue through the intervention of the angel" [he assumes the intervention of an angel as the heathen assume the intervention of demons], "the spirit is corporeally washed in the water, and the flesh is in the same spiritually cleansed."<sup>2</sup> "The spirit is corporeally washed!" Elsewhere he says: "The flesh is the very condition on which salvation hinges. The flesh is washed in order that the soul may be cleansed; the flesh is anointed that the soul may be consecrated; the flesh is signed (with the cross) that the soul too may be fortified; the flesh is shadowed with the imposition of hands that the soul also may be illuminated by the Spirit; the flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ that the soul likewise may fatten on God."<sup>3</sup> But just at this point Tertullian's dialectical path is crossed, and the heat

Tertullian's treatise based on this idea.

Tertullian puzzled by the similarity of heathen rites,

<sup>1</sup> "Hibbert Lectures on the Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church," p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> On Baptism," Chap. IV.

<sup>3</sup> "De Ress. Carn.," Chap. VIII.

of his argument chilled by his consciousness of the singular similarity between the ceremonies he is defending and those of the nature-religions, by the recollection that in the worships of Isis and Mithras, and in the Eleusinean Mysteries, they have exactly similar rites, and believe with equal confidence that the effect of their baptism is their regeneration, and the remission of the penalties due to their sins; and his defence of his own position is far from satisfactory. He can only attribute the pagan rites to "the zeal of the devil rivalling the things of God," just as Justin Martyr did before him, for Justin too was staggered by the same thing. Of course the Christians did not consciously borrow their ceremonial from heathen sources. Innumerable converts from heathenism, with the influence of the pagan mystery-cults still strong upon them, were gratified on seeing the old familiar ritual reproduced in the Christian services. As Dr. Bigg explains the matter: "Crowds were pressing into the Church, mostly ignorant and undisciplined, some rich and wilful. They brought with them the moral taint, the ingrained prejudices of their old life. We learn from many sources that the same incongruous blending of the gospel with pagan superstitions, which recurred during the conversion of the Northern barbarians, existed in some degree in the second and third centuries."<sup>1</sup>

as Justin Martyr had been before him.

Dr. Bigg's explanation of the matter.

The testimony of the older Latin service-books.

The Gelasian *Sacramentary*.

The Gallican *Sacramentary*.

Cyril of Alexandria's testimony.

The exorcism of demonic and evil influences from the water and oil in baptism and the conviction that, thus exorcised and sanctified, these physical elements really cleansed the soul from sin find expressions in the older Latin service-books. Here is a form in the *Gelasian Sacramentary*<sup>2</sup>: "Hear us, Almighty God, and send virtue into the substance of this water, that washed by it he [the person being baptised] may be entitled at once to health [or salvation] and eternal life." This is followed by an address to the water: "I exorcise thee, creature of the water [the demon of the water, no doubt], by the living God. I adjure thee by Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord that thou wilt produce in him who shall be baptised in thee a fountain of water springing up into life eternal, regenerating him to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." So in the *Gallican Sacramentary*, after the exorcism, it is added: "be thou holy water, blessed water, washing away defilements and remitting sins." "By the agency of the Holy Ghost," says Cyril of Alexandria, "the

<sup>1</sup> Bigg's "Christian Platonists of Alexandria," p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> I., 73.

water perceived by the senses is metamorphosed into a certain divine and ineffable power." <sup>1</sup> "Putting these and many similar traits together," says Harnack, "one feels driven to conclude that Christianity had become a religion of magic with its centre of gravity in the sacramental mysteries." <sup>2</sup>

But "this state of things could not continue," Harnack adds. In the apostolic age the Church was content with two simple outward rites. But already, even in Tertullian's time, the additions to the simple New Testament rite of baptism are numerous, and in the line of the ideas just referred to. Even on admission to the catechumenate a ceremonial was gone through—signing with the cross, the laying on of hands, and a sort of preparatory exorcism (*exsufflatio* and *insufflatio*). The period of the catechumenate was fixed at two years by the Council of Elvira, but the time varied. When the time for administering the rite of baptism arrived, the candidate was required, first of all, to "renounce the devil and his pomp, and his angels"; <sup>3</sup> then, after a profession of his faith, he himself was exorcised to free him from the power of the devil, and break the influence of evil spirits on him, after which he was anointed with oil; then when the water was exorcised, the exorcism being accompanied by "*insufflatio*," or breathing three times upon the water, it was consecrated by the bishop, virtue imparted to it, and the sign of the cross made over it. The candidate is now thrice immersed in the water in the threefold name and pledged to God's service; <sup>4</sup> after which he is again anointed with the blessed oil, which (Tertullian says) "runs down carnally, but profits spiritually, in the same way as the act of baptism itself too is carnal, in that we are plunged in water, but the effect spiritual in that we are freed from sins." <sup>5</sup> The person baptised is then given a mixture of milk and honey <sup>6</sup> as a sign of sonship and of citizenship in the heavenly Canaan, while in the West salt also is administered. There follows next the laying on of the hands of the bishop, producing what Tertullian calls "a sublime spiritual modulation," whatever that may mean, and prayer is offered for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Later the laying on of hands was separated from the baptismal act in the West, and became the sacra-

In Tertullian's time the additions to the New Testament rite numerous.

<sup>1</sup> "In Joan," III., 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Expansion of Christianity," Eng. trans., Vol. I., p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Tertull. "De Coron. Mil.," 3.

<sup>4</sup> Tertull., *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> "De Baptismo," Chap. VII.

<sup>6</sup> Tertull. "De Coron.," 3.

ment of Confirmation. Tertullian already mentions sponsors as being present.

Other ceremonies added later.

Such had the service of baptism become in the third century, while later it became still more elaborate and dramatic. Other ceremonies were the kiss given by the bishop and all the faithful present, the unction of the head, and a "procession of many lights wherewith bright and virgin souls go forth to meet their Lord, having the lamps of faith bright and burning." The wearing of white robes, generally linen, by the newly baptised, became a universal custom in both East and West, and was continued till the Lord's day following. The outer garment, or "alb," was often kept, as in Constantine's case, as a shroud for the body after death. After baptism, too, it was customary in the East to crown the newly baptised with garlands. Easter and Pentecost are named by Tertullian as suitable seasons for the administration of the rite.

Chief seasons of administration were Easter and Pentecost.

A tendency to delay the rite sets in.

One abuse or corruption of a Divine ordinance leads to another. Even so early as the third century a tendency has set in to delay baptism till immediately before death. Tertullian urges its postponement in the case of young children. "Let them come while they are growing up. Let them become Christians when they are capable of knowing Christ. Why does the innocent period of life hasten to the remission of sins?"—the remission, that is, which he conceives baptism to secure. A century and a half later than Tertullian the baptism of children even in Christian families was far from being general. Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and Chrysostom, who were brought up in Christian households, were not baptised till after what may be called their conversion; and there were large numbers who, like the Emperor Constantine, postponed baptism till they were on their death-bed. Many shrank from the obligation imposed at baptism of renouncing the world and sin, and of a life of Christian service and self-sacrifice; and many feared the danger of lapse into serious sin, and thereby the loss of baptismal grace; and only at an advanced age, or in dangerous illness, did they have recourse to it to cancel sin and fit them for heaven.

Reasons for delay.

Christian worship regarded from the point of view of the pagan mysteries.

Even already in the second century, as we have seen, Christian worship has begun to be regarded from the point of view of the pagan mysteries. In his reference to gifts of grace, to illumination, initiation, and perfection Clement of Alexandria is dominated by this point of view; as is

Tertullian also.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly when baptism comes to be classed as a mystery, its celebration soon begins to be confined to the initiated, and pains are taken to preserve the secrecy of the rite. Tertullian blames the heretics for not separating between the unbaptised and the baptised, the uninitiated and the initiated, and for allowing the unbaptised and even the heathen to attend the second part of the service, thus giving (as he puts it) that which is holy to the dogs, and casting their pearls before swine.<sup>2</sup> Hence arose a new arrangement of the Divine service, according to which the first and what was thought the less sacred part (*Missa catechumenorum*) was open to all, and the second, more mysterious, and secret part (*Missa fidelium*) was reserved for the baptised, that is, the consecrated and initiated members. With this, too, was associated what was called the *Disciplina arcani*, by which certain portions of the cultus, usages, and formulæ, the act of baptism itself, and the Baptismal Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and the formulæ and usages of the Supper, were treated as inviolable secrets, which were not to be spoken of openly before the uninitiated—a discipline which begins in the time of Tertullian and culminates in the fourth and fifth centuries. Thus it was only at the end of their time of preparation, and by word of mouth, and as a strict secret to be scrupulously kept inviolable, that the Baptismal Confession and certain other things were communicated to the catechumens. The *traditio symboli*—the oral communication of the Confession of Faith, to be learned by heart, was a most important event in the life of the catechumen, and in the greater part of the Western Church took place on Palm Sunday. "As those who were admitted to the inner sights of the mysteries," says Dr. Hatch, "had a formula or password (*σύμβολον*), so the catechumens had a formula which was only entrusted to them in the last days of their catechumenate—the baptismal formula itself and the Lord's Prayer" [the word "formula" here is evidently a slip or misprint for "confession"]. "And to the present day the technical name for a creed is *σύμβολον*, or password."<sup>3</sup> On an earlier page Dr. Hatch has said: "Up to a certain time there is no evidence that Christianity had any secrets. It was preached openly to the world. It guarded worship by imposing a moral bar to admission. But its rites were simple, and its teaching was public. After a certain time

So baptism.

And so pains now taken to preserve the secrecy of the rite.

Hence the service divided into the *Missa catechumenorum* and the *Missa fidelium*.

Hence too the *Disciplina arcani*.

The *traditio symboli* or password.

Christianity had no secrets in the early period.

Now the pagan mysteries imitated.

<sup>1</sup> See "De Præscript. Hær.," 40.

<sup>2</sup> "De Præscript. Hær.," 41.

<sup>3</sup> "Hibbert Lectures," p. 298.



all is changed ; mysteries have arisen in the once open and easily accessible faith, and there are doctrines which must not be declared in the hearing of the uninitiated." <sup>1</sup> How the change was brought about there is no difficulty in seeing.

The baptismal service becomes a *mysterium tremendum*.

The baptismal service thus became not only a *mysterium salutare* (a saving mystery), but a *mysterium tremendum* (an awful mystery) ; and the celebration of the ceremonial connected with it was weird and dazzling, entrancing and imposing in proportion—had in fact " passed into a ritual which at every turn recalls the ritual of the (pagan) mysteries " (Hatch).

The final development as formulated by Trent and the *Roman Catechism*.

We are now prepared for the final development in the Roman Catholic doctrine of baptism as formulated in the decrees of the Council of Trent, and set forth in the *Roman Catechism*. Briefly stated it is as follows :—

The effect of baptism is the complete removal of original and actual sin, etc.,

That the effect of baptism is not only remission of sins, but the complete removal of original and actual sin, so that nothing of the nature of sin, not even the roots of it, remain ; the old man is put off, and the new man created, and those who have thus put on the new man are " innocent, immaculate, pure, innoxious." Baptism secures the infusion of sanctifying grace, impresses an indelible character on the soul, and opens heaven to the baptised ; and it does all this as an *opus operatum*, that is, by an efficacy inherent in itself, which is only a more academical and technical way of describing it as acting magically—a method of salvation which is essentially external and physical through a material agent, as opposed to a spiritual and ethical method. The baptismal water, acting by a sort of " medicinal virtue " imparted to it (so Tertullian describes it), operates in a way exactly parallel to that in which the drugs of the *materia medica* operate on the patient in the sphere of the physical. In the case of infants the only condition of its efficacy is the right administration of the sacrament ; in the case of adults the only condition is that the subject of it is not in mortal sin, and does not resist by an opposing will. Thus, according to the teaching of the Church of Rome, all the benefits of Christ's redemption are conveyed to the soul by water-baptism, the one and only medium of conveyance, so that, as Bellarmine says, " The Church has always believed that infants perish if they depart this life without baptism " ; while of course all the unbaptised are doomed to eternal perdition.

and does this as an *opus operatum*, by an efficacy inherent in itself that is, really acting magically.

<sup>1</sup> " Hibbert Lectures," p. 293.

And bear in mind that this is what the Church of Rome understands by "justification." "Justification" is not what the apostle Paul, according to the most strict and scholarly exegesis (such as we have, for example, in Sanday and Headlam's *Commentary on Romans*), affirms it to be; but includes not only remission of sins but regeneration, the infusion of a new principle of righteousness, and the impression of an indelible character on the baptised—all this being effected by an external rite, acting by a virtue inherent in itself, when duly administered. The Council of Trent anathematises all who deny that a sacrament acts *ex opere operato*.

And this is what the Latin Church understands by "justification."

Now the main question here at issue is whether a man's state before God—his salvation in short—depends upon an external rite, or whether the rite depends for its efficacy on his internal state at baptism, as well as the blessing of the Holy Spirit. We have seen already that by the express teaching of the New Testament the efficacy of the rite depends on the internal state of the person undergoing it and the agency of the Holy Spirit; that is, on his *repentance* and *faith*, the antecedent conditions of baptism, which already involve regeneration and forgiveness, as well as on the continued operation of the Spirit. The idea that a man's state before God, a man's salvation, depends upon an external rite is at variance not only with its specific teaching as to the conditions of baptism, but with the whole tenor of the New Testament. The substance and tenor of New Testament teaching, expressed in a multitude of forms, are that we are "justified by faith," "saved by faith," that "we are the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus," by which also we receive forgiveness of sin. Christianity is predominantly a spiritual and ethical religion, and even the two simple rites prescribed by it are found on close examination to be mainly spiritual and ethical in their import also.

What does the rite depend on for its efficacy?

The two sacraments, like Christianity itself, essentially spiritual and ethical.

On the other hand, the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration," as taught by the Latin Church, tends to divorce morality from religion. According to that doctrine, a man who has been baptised is a true child of God, yet may be and often is living a life of utter worldliness. By a punctilious observance of external forms he may escape the censure of the Church. And the claim that the baptismal rite *ex opere operato* regenerates the soul is refuted and contradicted by the plain, incontrovertible facts of life. A vast proportion of those who have been

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration tends to divorce morality from religion.

baptised by that Church herself prove by their lives that they are not regenerate. The supreme and final test is "By their fruits ye shall know them."

As a method of salvation it turns out to be futile.

The justifying grace of baptism forfeited by mortal sin, from which who can be sure that he is free?

But now observe finally how futile and ineffectual this method of salvation turns out to be. Remember, it is only original sin and the sins committed *before* baptism that are remitted and removed by the baptismal rite. Post-baptismal sins are not included in that "justification" which baptism is held to effect. If any one, after being baptised, falls into mortal sin, all the benefits accruing to him through his baptism are forfeited and lost, the work of his salvation has to be done over again, and the baptism cannot be repeated. The mortal sins are pride, covetousness, unchastity, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth. It is evident that no one can ever be sure that he has not been guilty of one or other of these mortal sins since he was baptised. As a matter of fact there are practically none except those dying in infancy who by mortal sin have not forfeited the justifying grace of baptism, and who do not need to be justified and saved by some other method.

The device of saving men by an external rite thus turns out a fiasco.

Thus the Roman Catholic Church's device of justifying, regenerating and saving men by means of an external rite has turned out to be, fundamentally and practically, after all an egregious failure and fiasco. The whole grace bestowed in baptism, great as it is in the Roman Catholic representation of it, is utterly neutralised, and all the benefits secured by it lost, by mortal sin; and who is there who can flatter himself that he has not committed such, and so lost the grace conveyed in his baptism? Here is a total shipwreck indeed, when all seemed safe and secure! Has Rome made provision against such a *débâcle*, such an utter extinction of all hope for the future? Oh! yes. The Church of Rome seems to have an inexhaustible fund of ingenuity, available in such emergencies!

"A second plank" provided in Penance—Rome's "working system" of salvation.

When it was found that in the case of so many the benefits of baptism were shipwrecked and lost through mortal sin, the Church found what she has called "a second plank" in Penance—"a second plank after the shipwreck of grace lost." Ambrose indeed had called almsgiving, one of the most valued and profitable forms of penance, as good as "a second bath for the soul" (baptism being of course the first). The members of the Church, in the terrible predicament in which they found themselves, struggling helplessly in the angry waves, must have felt the crying need

of a "plank" or raft of some sort. And the raft that was thrown to them was penance.

It is in penance, accordingly, that we have what has been called Rome's "working system" of justification and salvation. It is of course, in despite and defiance of the apostle Paul, essentially a system of justification by works. The sacrament of penance will be discussed and considered at some length later. Only the briefest sketch of it can be given here.

An elaborate system of salvation by works of human merit.

If true contrition is not forthcoming, what is called "attrition," a lower feeling such as arises from the fear of hell and its punishment, may suffice, along with confession to the priest, who upon confession gives absolution, prescribing at the same time works of penance to be performed as "satisfactions," or reparations made to God for the sins committed. By the absolution of the priest the sinner is delivered from the *eternal* penalty due to his sin, but the *temporal* penalty still remains to be expiated by the sinner's own penances and good works. These are seldom, if ever, discharged fully in this life, and have to be paid in Purgatory, but here the sufferer may get help from a variety of sources—masses on his behalf; a storehouse or treasury of merit derived from works of supererogation, and the like, kept in the custody of the Pope; indulgences or relaxations of penance—the whole being essentially a system of justification by works as opposed to the New Testament method of justification by grace. Such is the travesty which takes the place of the Scriptural method of salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. And yet, in spite of all this elaborate machinery of justification by works of human merit, the Roman Catholic never can be sure that he is really justified, or his salvation secure.<sup>1</sup> It was on account of this feeling of insecurity that the great champion controversialist of Rome, Bellarmine, after an elaborate defence of the Roman Catholic dogma of Justification, practically surrendered the whole position he had been defending by this significant admission: "On account of the uncertainty of one's own righteousness, and the danger of empty boasting, it is safest to place one's whole trust in the mercy of God alone, and in His goodness." To a plain man it would seem better to do that at the beginning!

The system of salvation by penance briefly sketched.

<sup>1</sup> See Decree of Council of Trent on Justification, ch. 9.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE SACRIFICE AND SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

IN the Lord's Supper as instituted by our Lord and further explained by St. Paul three elements or aspects of it in particular are so emphasised that we cannot but regard them as vital and essential.

The Lord's  
Supper :  
1. A com-  
memora-  
tion.

(a) The *commemorative* character of the ordinance is put in the foreground by Jesus Himself. "This do in remembrance of me."<sup>1</sup> And the same purpose is recognised by St. Paul as being served by it when he says, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew (or proclaim) the Lord's death till He come."<sup>2</sup>

2. A com-  
munion or  
participa-  
tion.

(b) But the same apostle finds another and still deeper purpose in the institution. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion (or *joint participation*) of the blood of Christ? The bread (or loaf) which we break, is it not a communion (or joint participation) of the body of Christ?" That is, the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine St. Paul interprets as sacramental acts, signifying participation of Christ's body and blood. Although the evangelist John, in the sixth chapter of his Gospel, is probably not referring directly to the Lord's Supper, which is not yet instituted, the words of Jesus there recorded serve to interpret for us the meaning of the eating and the drinking in that service. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life," said Jesus. Even His own disciples "murmured" at this saying as a "hard" one, while the Jews asked, "Can this man give us His flesh to eat?" To whom Jesus replied in terms which ought to have kept the Church from a literal construction both of His words in St. John and of the purpose of the sacrament: "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." How could

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii, 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 26.

they who heard Him speak thus suppose that by the words, "Take, eat, this is my body," He meant to convey that the eating of "the flesh" or material body did profit beyond anything? The Westminster divines have therefore, I think, interpreted correctly this deeper purpose of the ordinance when they say that "the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace."

(c) But a third use and intent of the ordinance is noted by the apostle. He describes it as *a bond of unity*, which serves to unite those who partake of it in one body and brotherhood. "We being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."

3. A bond of unity.

Such, then, in briefest compass is the substance of New Testament teaching with regard to the nature and design of the Lord's Supper.

But from the second century onwards attention was concentrated on two aspects of the service—the Lord's Supper as a "*sacrifice*," and the Lord's Supper as a "*sacrament*." Under both these aspects the ordinance underwent a series of profound and radical changes; and what I have now to do is to trace the successive steps in the development under both these heads.

From second century onward regarded as a "sacrifice" and a "sacrament."

I. Our first business, then, is to follow step by step the gradual evolution of the Mass under the character of a "*sacrifice*"—a character which it began pretty early to assume. You will have observed, however, that nowhere in the New Testament is this term "*sacrifice*" applied to the Lord's Supper. An attempt has been made, it is true, to find some trace of the sacrificial idea in the words of institution. It has been suggested that the phrase *τοῦτο ποιεῖτε* ("This do," etc.) has a sacrificial meaning. But it is not too much to say that no exegete of the highest rank adopts this view. In his *International Critical Commentary* on St. Luke, Dr. Plummer gives a series of very powerful and convincing reasons why it cannot be maintained. He points out (1) that it has against it the ordinary meaning of *ποιεῖν* in the New Testament, in the Septuagint, and in Greek literature generally; (2) that it has against it the authority of all the Greek Fathers, who knew their own language and knew both the New Testament and the Septuagint; (3) that the authority of the early Liturgies is opposed to it; (4) that the authority of the vast majority of commentators, ancient and modern, and

1. As a "sacrifice."

This term never applied to it in the New Testament.

of the most various schools of thought is against it ; and (5) that the testimony of the Septuagint itself is against it. But, not only is it nowhere hinted in the New Testament that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice, much less a propitiatory sacrifice, a repetition of the death and sacrifice of Calvary ; as if by way of condemning such an error by anticipation, we are assured by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews that, unlike the high priest's offering, which was made every year, Christ's offering of Himself was "once for all" ; that, unlike the priests who stood daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice, "this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins *for ever*, sat down at the right hand of God, for by one offering he had perfected for ever them that are sanctified."<sup>1</sup> It is pointed out by the writer of the epistle that only one sacrifice was necessary, or even possible. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment, so was Christ once offered to bear the sins of many." That is, *men can die only once*. Jesus Himself could die only once ; only once could He pour out His blood unto death. He could therefore be only once offered a sacrifice for sin ; no second sacrifice by a second death on His part was possible. "The life is in the blood" ; and "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." As His blood could not be shed unto death twice, for He could not as man die twice, so there could be no second propitiatory sacrifice. The Council of Trent practically admits this by calling the sacrifice of the Mass an "unbloody sacrifice." If unbloody it is not propitiatory. Christ as man could die only once ; there could, therefore, be no second death, or expiatory sacrifice for sin.

Early in sub-apostolic age called a "sacrifice" in a spiritual sense.

Very early in the sub-apostolic literature, however, we do find the term "sacrifice" applied to certain features of the Eucharistic service. The gifts and offerings brought by the Christian people on the Lord's Day to provide bread and wine for the Eucharist and alms for the poor, but especially the prayers and thanksgivings offered in the service, are conceived and described as sacrifices, spiritual sacrifices. The Lord's Supper was itself pre-eminently a service of thanksgiving, that is, a "eucharist," prefaced by the prayer of thanksgiving, and accompanied by thankful offerings, to which it was very natural to apply the word "sacrifice," in the same way as we hear of "the sacrifice of praise." To such parts of the service it became quite common in early times to apply the term "sacrifice" or

<sup>1</sup> See Heb. ix. 12 ; x. 10, 12, 14.

"offering." We have it in the *Didaché*, in the Epistle of Clement of Rome, in Justin Martyr, and in Tertullian. Justin refers to the sacrifices which all Christians, whom he calls "the true high-priestly race," offer in the Eucharist, and adds that "prayers and giving of thanks when offered by worthy men are the only perfect and well-pleasing sacrifices to God; for such alone Christians have undertaken to offer, and in the remembrance effected by their solid food whereby the suffering of the Son of God which He endured is brought to mind."<sup>1</sup> And the fact that Christians—all Christians—offer such sacrifices Justin regards as proof of their priestly character, for he says, "God receives sacrifices from none but His priests." Tertullian says, "it is of spiritual sacrifices God speaks," and in particular, he adds, of the "sacrifice of praise."<sup>2</sup>

Yet, although the word was understood in a spiritual sense, it was, as Lightfoot has pointed out, the habit thus begun of describing the gifts and thanksgiving as "sacrifices," and the fact that the offering of these appeared as the act of an official class, that soon led to such officials being called "priests," and soon modified also the idea of the sacrifice they offered. It was under Cyprian that the development took a momentous step forward, which carried both the idea of "sacrifice" and the idea of a sacerdotal caste farther than had any of his predecessors. He calls the Eucharist itself "*the sacrifice*." The terms "sacrificare," "sacrificium celebrare," mean, for Cyprian, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which is by pre-eminence "the sacrifice of the Lord." "The bishop as the priest of God," he says, "does that which Jesus Christ our Lord and God, the Founder and Teacher of this sacrifice, did and taught."<sup>3</sup> "The priest truly discharges the office of Christ who imitates what Christ did, and he offers a full and true sacrifice in the Church of God and the Father when he proceeds to offer it according to what he sees Christ Himself offered"; and in the most explicit terms he adds: "The Lord's passion is the sacrifice which we offer."<sup>4</sup> He also tells us that in the celebration of the Eucharist not only was intercession made for brethren in affliction, but for the faithful departed.<sup>5</sup> Lightfoot therefore justly says that "as Cyprian crowned the edifice of episcopal power, so also was he the first to put forward without relief and without

But the term soon made to point to Christ's death as "*the sacrifice*," and the offerers are called "priests." The development completed under Cyprian.

<sup>1</sup> "Dial. with Tryph.," Chap. 117.

<sup>2</sup> "Adv. Jud.," c. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. lxxiii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. lix. 18; lxi. 2; lxiii. 7, 14; lxvi. 5; lxxiii.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. i., c. 2.



disguise these sacerdotal assumptions ; and so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them that nothing was left to his successors but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language." Remember that Cyprian was close on fifty years old at his conversion, that he had grown up to mature manhood in the observance of heathen rites and sacrifices, with firm faith in their magical effect, and was a warm and strenuous defender of them, and that he became Bishop of Carthage within two years of his baptism, so that his mind was possessed with such ideas and practices, and could not conceive of a religious system apart from them.

The offering of the "sacrifice" made available for souls in purgatory.

Now this idea that the Lord's Supper was not only a memorial of the death and sacrifice of Christ, but an actual *repetition* of it, once started, received greater emphasis and prominence as time went on. Cyril of Jerusalem informs us too that over what he calls "the propitiatory sacrifice" they were accustomed to commemorate those who had gone to rest, "believing that the greatest benefit would accrue to those on whose behalf prayer was offered while the holy and awful sacrifice was being displayed."<sup>1</sup> Even Augustine connects with the sacrament an offering for the repose of departed souls. It was Gregory the Great, however, who became Pope near the end of the sixth century, who raised the doctrine to the rank of an established dogma. He speaks of "the sacrifice of Christ as ever repeating itself in the Supper," and declares that "as often as we offer the sacrifice of His suffering we renew His passion for our absolution," which Gregory makes available not only for the living, but for the relief of sufferers in Purgatorial fire. Those who take certain sins with them beyond the grave pass to Purgatory with its purifying fires ; but by the sacrifice of the Mass offered on their behalf their Purgatorial pains are alleviated and curtailed.

The conviction returns to the great teachers that after all the Lord's Supper is not a repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary, but a memorial of it.

It is indeed very interesting and very suggestive to find that in the case of great teachers like Chrysostom and Augustine, and even of Popes like Gelasius I. and Gregory the Great, the conviction returns and finds expression again and again that, after all, the Lord's Supper is not strictly a sacrifice, or a repetition of the sacrifice of the Cross, but a commemoration or memorial of it. But the idea of its being itself an "awful and tremendous sacrifice" has taken such possession of the Church that such misgivings and memories of its original purpose are only waves

<sup>1</sup> "Catech. Mystag.," v.

and ripples on the surface while the great tidal current is carrying her irresistibly in another direction; the consequence being that before the fifth century ends a fundamental change has taken place. The homiletic service is discontinued in the parish churches. A materialistic conception of the Eucharist, in which the Lord Himself is held to be in a real sense incarnated in the physical elements, and immolated over again as a sacrifice, prevails, and the whole cultus is materialised along with it. The ceremonial connected with it assumes an aspect of external pomp and splendour, "thick laid as varnish on a harlot's cheek," to use Milton's phrase. The "awful and tremendous sacrifice" is accompanied by all the external accessories the imagination can devise to charm and hypnotise the senses and capture the emotional nature with dramatic and spectacular effects. The air is laden with the odours of incense. The number of the clergy is greatly increased, arrayed as they officiate in splendid sacerdotal vestments. What a change from the simple, homely service of apostolic times, observed at the close of a common meal in the house of one of the disciples!

But the new dogma persists,

and the rite is invested with more pomp and splendour.

Such, then, were the successive steps through which the ordinance passed in the process of its evolution as "a sacrifice." In the New Testament, as we saw, it is not so designated at all. In the sub-apostolic age, and even later, the gifts and prayers which accompany it begin to be called "sacrifices," but only in a spiritual sense. By the time of Cyprian, in the middle of the third century, the sacrifice is none other than the passion of our Lord, the sacrifice of the Cross; and finally this doctrine of a propitiatory sacrifice becomes a recognised and established dogma under Gregory the Great, who also connects with it the doctrine of a Purgatorial fire, in which sufferers are relieved by the offering of this sacrifice. At each step it gets farther away from the original idea of the Lord's Supper, and more and more deeply at variance with it.

II. We turn now to the *sacramental and mystical aspect* of the ordinance. What is the relation of the bread and wine in the Supper to the body and blood of Christ? What did Jesus mean when He said of the bread, "This is my body," and of the wine, "This is my blood"? At this point it may be helpful to remember that in the several reports of the words of institution which have come down to us we have a very significant variation. In two of them, instead of the phrase "This is my blood of the new cove-

II. The sacramental aspect of the service.

The relation between symbols and the things symbolised often described by words that seem to imply identity.

nant," Jesus is represented as saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Now this form of the words cannot possibly be understood as affirming a literal identity either between the wine and the blood, or between the cup and the new covenant. This version of the formula must beyond all question be understood not literally, but figuratively; and we have no right to assume that those who report it in that form misunderstood the meaning of the language used by our Lord. Besides, nothing is more common in Scripture than to express the relation between material signs, figures, images, symbols, and the things they represent by words that seem to denote identity. "The seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years." "The ten horns are ten kings." "The good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one." "The seven candlesticks are the seven churches." I am not aware of any warrant or justification for understanding the words "This is my body" otherwise than in this mystical, symbolical sense. How could the twelve suppose that Jesus meant to convey that the piece of unleavened bread which He had just blessed was actually converted into the living body of their Master at that moment reclining before them at the table? Could anything be more fantastic, or more incongruous with the occasion, than such a suggestion?

The early Fathers vary and vacillate in their exposition, and fall into two classes—symbolists and metabolists.

But passing now to the post-apostolic age, the early Fathers vary and vacillate not a little in their answer to this question, What is the relation between the bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ? some seeing and carefully noting the distinction between the sign and the thing signified; some ignoring it, and affirming the elements, after the prayer of consecration, to be in some sense His body and blood. The teaching fluctuates between a symbolical representation and a mystical transformation. The Fathers, in fact, may be fairly placed in one or other of these two classes—the *symbolists* and the *metabolists*; those among whom the symbolical, spiritual or dynamical conception predominates; and those who teach that the bread and wine become in some sense the body and blood of Christ, although neither class is always strictly consistent with itself.

1. The symbolists.

Among those who explain the words "This is my body," "This is my blood," figuratively and spiritually it is rather curious to find both Tertullian and Cyprian. When Tertullian quotes our Lord as saying, "Hoc est corpus

meum " (" This is my body "), he adds : " id est figura mei corporis " (" that is, a figure of my body ").<sup>1</sup> Of course he and others who speak in this way teach a mystical participation of the body and blood. Cyprian expresses himself somewhat similarly.

As was to be expected, the Alexandrian Fathers are still more insistent on a symbolical and spiritual interpretation. Clement of Alexandria more than once calls the wine a symbol or allegory of the blood, and affirms that the communicant receives not the physical but the spiritual blood, that is, the life of Christ. Origen is specially careful to distinguish the earthly from the heavenly bread of life, and supposes it to be the design of the Supper to feed the soul with the Divine Word. He speaks of the bread as the body of Christ typically and symbolically. Eusebius of Cæsarea expresses a similar view ; while Athanasius, " the father of orthodoxy," recognises only a spiritual participation of Christ through the symbols of the bread and wine. He finds in the sixth chapter of John, where our Lord Himself shows that " the flesh profiteth nothing," a reference to the Supper, and states that " the bread of God," and " the flesh and blood " of which it is necessary to partake, are to be understood spiritually.<sup>2</sup> Jesus spake as He did, he says, to " draw them away from the corporeal conception." Gregory Nazianzen calls the consecrated elements symbols and archetypes of the great mysteries ;<sup>3</sup> while Augustine in like manner regards the bread and wine as symbolical, and teaches a spiritual participation of Christ by faith. He distinguishes carefully between the outward sign and the inward grace of the sacrament ; he calls the bread and wine " figuræ " or " signa corporis et sanguinis Christi " (" figures " or " signs of the body and blood of Christ "), and discriminates between " that which is visibly received, and that which is spiritually eaten and drunk." <sup>4</sup> But, like some of the other Fathers, Augustine is not always consistent in his teaching, for while in one place he calls the Supper a " sacrificium corporis Christi," in another he designates it a " memoria peracti sacrificii " (" a memorial of the once-for-all sacrifice "), and represents the body to be the spiritual body of Christ.<sup>5</sup> Jerome affirms that it

<sup>1</sup> " Adv. Marc.," iv., 40 ; see also iii., 19.    <sup>2</sup> " Ad. Serap.," iv., 19.

<sup>3</sup> " Orat.," xvii., 12 ; viii., 17 ; iv., 52.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. iii. 1 ; " Contra Adamant.," xii., 3 ; " In Joannem," Tract., xxv. ; xxvi., 18 ; " De Civ. Dei," xx., 25 ; Epist. xxiii. ; " De Doctrin. Christ.," iii., 10, 16, 19.

<sup>5</sup> C. Faust., xx., 18.

is the faith of the receiver, not the words of institution, that makes a true Eucharist, and that any other view is against the law of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Even Pope Gelasius at the end of the fifth century, in his work against Eutyches and Nestorius, says, "The sacrament of the body and blood of Christ we receive as a Divine thing because by it we are made partakers of the Divine nature. Yet the substance or nature of the bread and wine does not cease. And assuredly the image and similitude of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in the performance of the mysteries."<sup>2</sup>

2. The  
metabolists.

But while a spiritual conception of the Eucharist thus finds weighty and wide expression, another and more realistic interpretation of it appears from an early date. Although the teaching of Justin Martyr on the Eucharist is in other respects spiritual, he supposes that after the prayer of thanksgiving the food blessed is in some sense the flesh and blood of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> His idea seems to be that the Logos mysteriously connects Himself in some way with the bread and wine. Irenæus in like manner, in combating the Gnostic Docetists, affirms that the bread and wine become, by the presence of the Divine Logos and the power of the Holy Spirit, the body and blood of Christ, although elsewhere he calls them "antitypes" of the body and blood<sup>4</sup> and rejects the cannibal idea of a "real" eating of Christ's flesh.<sup>5</sup> So, in spite of the more spiritual conception of the sacrament to which reference has been made, and which prevailed so widely, the realistic view, under certain influences to be noticed in a moment, grew more and more into acceptance. Especially from the middle of the fourth century onwards what may be called the metabolic doctrine prevailed and overshadowed the other. We find it definitely taught by Hilary of Poitiers, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem, Leo the Great, and others. Yet even such Fathers fall far short of the later doctrine of transubstantiation. The word "*μεταβολή*" (change), "transfiguratio," and other such words are used to describe it, and the "change" or "transfiguration" undergone is compared to that in the water of baptism and in the oil of confirmation after they are consecrated. Chrysostom maintains that "the nature of the bread remains."<sup>6</sup> Theodoret still asserts that the symbols of the

From  
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transub-  
stantiation.

<sup>1</sup> "In Soph.," xvi.

<sup>2</sup> "De Duabus Naturis," in Routh's "Opuscula," 493.

<sup>3</sup> "Apol.," i., 66. <sup>4</sup> Fragment, 38. <sup>5</sup> Ed. Grabe, p. 460

<sup>6</sup> "Ep. ad Cæsar."

body and blood remain in their original substance and form, and admit of their being seen and felt as before, but the contemplation of the spirit and of faith sees in them what they have become";<sup>1</sup> and Pope Gelasius, as we have just seen, takes the same view.

Nor is it difficult to see the influences under which this tendency to materialise the objects and *media* of worship proceeded. Primitive Christianity is distinguished by its spiritual character and simple forms of worship. Indeed, one of the most persistent charges brought against it by its heathen opponents was its lack of those external, material supports which they regarded as essential to religion. Their favourite reproach was that it had no temples, no altars, no priesthood, no sacrifices, no incense, and no images. And the early Christian apologists not only freely admitted the truth of this impeachment; they gloried in it as differentiating Christian faith and worship from the religions of heathenism. They recalled the fundamental teaching of the Master that God is a Spirit, and that the true worshippers are they who worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The statements in which apologists like Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, and Arnobius vindicate the spirituality and simplicity of Christian worship have been given already and are most striking and suggestive.

The influences which materialised the cultus.

But the whole cultus of the Church soon underwent a complete and profound change which externalised and materialised it, after which it could no longer be said that it had no altars, no priesthood, no sacrifices, no images, no incense; for these had now become its most conspicuous characteristics. How was the change brought about? Already the heathen cults had begun to avenge themselves for the inroads and conquests made by Christianity by inoculating the Church with their own *virus*, i.e., with their own tendency to sensualise and materialise religious worship. The worship of Isis from Egypt, of Mithras from Persia, and other Oriental nature and mystery cults had, as we have seen already, spread widely over the West. These nature religions rested on the belief that a Divine life pervaded the whole world of nature. Hence the deification of the forms and forces of nature, such as we have in the ancient mythologies. These cults had their priesthoods with their gorgeous vestments, their sacrifices, their rituals, splendid ceremonials and festival days. Christian converts from heathenism, fresh from the atmo-

How the change in the cultus was brought about.

<sup>1</sup> Eranistes, "Dial.," 2.

sphere and contagion of such a ritual, men like Tertullian and Cyprian, who had grown up to middle life in it, and whose minds and natures were imbued and saturated with it, could not but bring the leaven of the pagan cultus over with them. As Dr. Bigg says in his *Christian Platonists*: "Crowds were pressing into the Church, mostly ignorant and undisciplined, some rich and wilful. They brought with them the moral taint, the ingrained prejudices of their old life. We learn from many sources that the same incongruous blending of the gospel with pagan superstitions which recurred during the conversion of the Northern barbarians existed in some degree even in the second and third centuries." Hence before long the cultus of the Church by a series of so-called consecrations of material things appropriated the elements and forces of the world of matter for the benefit of the religious life. Tertullian in his treatise on Baptism not only attributes a sacramental and symbolical character to material objects, but, confusing the sign with the thing signified, declares material things themselves to be endowed with a certain spiritual, magical, wonder-working virtue. The water of baptism, after consecration, acting with magical efficacy, itself regenerates and sanctifies. The anointing oil or chrism, he says, "runs over the body according to its carnal nature, but profits the spirit by freeing it from sin." The step from the symbolical use of such things to the conclusion that the application of them, acting magically, would itself renew and sanctify, was indeed a long one, but it was already taken by Tertullian. The supreme example of this sort is of course found in the magical effect of the observance of the Eucharist. The doctrine that grace was conveyed by this sacrament *ex opere operato*, according to which the outward physical act of eating the wafer was itself effective apart from the faith of the recipient, was simply another case of the deification of matter; as, similarly, contact with the relic of a dead saint or martyr acted on the soul beneficially without any consciousness or effort on the part of the person benefited; or as the perils or evils which threaten the body might be averted by the mere physical act of making the sign of the cross; or as the consecrations innumerable, such as those of churches, and the vessels and utensils belonging to them or related to them, secured them against evil influences and agencies. The doctrine of the Incarnation itself was drawn into the current of this material and sensuous reaction. It was Gregory of Nyssa who,

near the end of the fourth century, was the first to suggest that in the union of Christ with the bread and wine in the Eucharist we have a continuance of the Incarnation, and that the effect reached much farther than the Eucharist itself. The influence of the Incarnation was according to him mediated to humanity through the sacrament of the altar, and thus distributed to the world in life-giving power. "The visible Church is the Son of God," says Möhler,<sup>1</sup> "as He continuously appears, ever repeats Himself, and eternally renews His youth among men in human form. It is His perennial incarnation." Hence Cyril of Jerusalem recommends the communicants to touch their eyes with the holy particle of the body before partaking, and to touch the forehead, the eyes, and the other organs of the senses with the moisture remaining on the mouth and lips from "the cup of the blood." Hence the doctrine that, although the soul was not present in it, a virtue resided in the dead body of a saint because of the righteous soul which for so many years had dwelt in it and used it as its minister, and still more, of course, because it had partaken of the body of Christ Himself. In the multiplication of the sacraments to seven we see a like materialising principle at work in this singular development and extension of the cultus, as we see it also in the increasing number of festivals in the Christian year. In fact, the places left vacant by the dethronement of the heathen deities and heroes were now retenanted by saints, martyrs and confessors, and above all by the virgin mother. A new mythology not much less legendary in its history than the old took the place of the old heathen mythology; while in the spread of image worship, and in much besides upon which I cannot now delay, we see the same law at work. Thus it was that in the fourth and fifth and later centuries the whole Christian cultus was so fundamentally and profoundly changed that it became the antithesis and exact opposite of what it was under the apostles; in its sensuous and material splendours and spectacular effects, chiefly derived from paganism, it now eclipsed and outshone the pagan cults.

and Cyril  
of Jeru-  
salem's  
advice.

Under the influences I have thus briefly indicated, the Mediæval Church was now prepared for another step forward in the development of the doctrine of the sacrament of the altar. A monk of Corbie called Radbert, in a work on *The Body and Blood of Christ*, propounded in 844 what later became known as the doctrine of transubstantiation,

Radbert  
propounds  
the doctrine  
of transub-  
stantiation.

<sup>1</sup> "Symbolik," 332.



Opposed by  
Rabanus  
Maurus and  
others.

although that word was not used by him. The treatise, which taught that the elements were transformed into the same body which was born of a virgin, only the form, colour, and taste of the elements remaining, created a great sensation; for there was much in the theory put forward at variance with the teaching of greatly revered Church Fathers such as Augustine. It was strongly opposed and combated by many of Radbert's contemporaries, such as Rabanus Maurus, who criticised it from the Augustinian point of view. It was opposed with great vigour and ability by Ratramnus, a fellow monk of Radbert, who maintained that no change takes place in the elements, but that in a spiritual sense they become through the faith of the recipient the body and blood of Christ. It was opposed by that great and sturdy Irish genius, John Scotus Erigena, from Bangor in County Down, then residing at the Court of Charles the Bald. He insisted that the true body and blood were not in the sacrament, which was only a memorial of them. Later still, it was ably and powerfully resisted by Berengarius in the eleventh century, who held what has been called a dynamic theory of the sacrament, that there is no change in the elements, and that the body and blood are received only by the believer. So the great debate went on, Lanfranc going beyond Radbert, while Anselm went farther still, and affirmed (what was later authoritatively declared) that the whole Christ, God and Man, is in every portion of the bread and wine. Abelard states that in his day (the twelfth century) the controversy whether the bread was only the figure of Christ's body, or the very substance of His flesh, was still going on. But the dogma of a literal transubstantiation was at length authoritatively sanctioned by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 under Pope Innocent III. It was a characteristic fruit and outcome of the mediæval scholastic philosophy. It was held that through the consecration of the priest the whole substance of the bread and wine is changed into the very body and blood of Christ, so changed that nothing of the substance of the bread and wine remains. True, the "accidents" or sensible properties, the form, colour, taste, smell, specific gravity, chemical affinities, and even nutritive qualities of both elements, remain, but very curiously these qualities inhere in no subject or substance, for the substance of the bread and wine is gone. Such a theory of the relation between a substance and its qualities had of course no difficulties for the mediæval scholastic philosophy.

But  
formally  
sanctioned  
by the  
Fourth  
Lateran  
Council in  
1215 under  
Innocent  
III.

Having been once authoritatively declared, a series of consequences were perceived to flow from the dogma.

Consequences of the dogma.  
1. Adoration of the Host.

1. One was the adoration of the Host. "There is no room left for doubt," says the Council of Trent, "that all the faithful of Christ may, according to the custom ever received in the Catholic Church, render in veneration the worship of '*latria*,' which is due to the true God, to this most holy Sacrament. For we believe the same God to be present therein of whom the Eternal Father when introducing Him into the world says, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.' " The doctrine is that, as the soul of Christ is inseparable from His body, and as the Divinity is inseparable from His soul, the whole Christ, body, soul, and Divinity, is present in the sacrament, and in each and every particle of the bread and wine. Consequently in the Latin Church, from the eleventh century onward, the elevation of the Host in the form of a wafer, noted by the ringing of a bell, as a sign of the consummation of the miracle, and of the offering of the awful sacrifice, gave notice to the people to prostrate themselves in adoration. Similarly, when the Host was being carried through the streets to a sick person, a ministrant went before the priest with a bell to signify that all the people in the streets and houses should prostrate themselves in worship—that highest form of worship that is due to God only. This was ordained as a universal requirement by Pope Honorius III. in 1217. In 1264 a special festival for the adoration of the Host, known as the Feast of Corpus Christi, was by Urban IV. ordained for the whole Church.

2. Another effect of the doctrine was the aggrandisement of the priesthood, and an immense increase in their influence and power, and in the reverence and awe which they inspired. How could the power of the priest be more fearfully demonstrated than in this miracle of miracles, in which by the prayer of consecration he makes the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, creates, in short, the Lord of heaven and earth, body, soul, and Divinity? This stupendous miracle is the main thing in the sacrament—the centre and climax of the ceremonial. The consummation and perfection of the sacrament are not (says Thomas Aquinas) *in usu fidelium, sed in consecratione materie*. What dignity belongs to him, what power may he not claim to exercise, who can perform such a miracle of miracles?

2. Aggrandisement of the priesthood.

3. The change in the elements was declared to be

3. The change in

the elements permanent.

*permanent*; whereupon the question was raised and gravely debated: What happened in case a dog or a mouse nibbled some crumbs of the consecrated Host? It was held that even in such a case the real body of Christ was still there; but in order to lessen the possibility of crumbs being dropped wafers were substituted for bread. Probably for a similar reason it was decided to withhold the cup from the laity, lest any of the blood should be spilt when it was being conveyed to the mouth; and this was justified by what was called the doctrine of "concomitance," on the plea that the blood was contained in the body and did not need to be taken separately—a practice condemned in the early Church and by Pope Leo the Great as a Manichæan heresy, and declared by Pope Gelasius to be a "*grande sacrilegium*."

4. Provided a lucrative trade for the clergy.

4. It was another natural outcome of the dogma that merit should be sought in the foundation of masses, private masses with only the officiating priest present, especially soul masses for the dead, which now became a lucrative trade for the clergy, whose numbers were much increased.

The development illegitimate for many reasons.

We have thus traced the evolution through its successive steps to its final outcome, so that we are now in a position to compare the finished product with the original institution. Roman Catholic writers of authority, as has been already noted in the Preface, have themselves admitted that it is not legitimate to mutilate a New Testament institution, or to add alien or even superfluous matter to it, or to change its original nature and character to something else. But this has been done on a large scale and in a most glaring manner in the case before us.

1. As we have shown, the ordinance has been daringly and grossly mutilated by withholding the cup from the laity, leaving out on a preposterous plea one of its constituent elements in insolent disregard of the express command of Christ: "Drink ye all of it."

2. Again, additions not only superfluous, but positively alien, have been made to it in changing what was instituted as a memorial of Christ's death and sacrifice into an actual propitiatory sacrifice, a repetition of the sacrifice of the Cross, and that in the face of clear Scripture teaching, and in a way dishonouring and derogatory to the sacrifice made "once for all."

3. The creation of a sacerdotal caste, of which there is no trace in the New Testament, the invasion thus of the rights involved in the priesthood of all believers, a caste

invested with the pretended power, every time they choose to repeat the form of consecration, to bend the will of the Almighty to their service so as to perform an astounding miracle in the making of Christ's body, the creation of the Godman, the Lord of Glory—all this is so arrogant and impious a presumption that to a plain man it seems nothing short of blasphemy. A Bavarian priest called Kinzelmann, in a sermon preached in 1872, made the following extraordinary assertions: "We priests stand as far above the Emperor, Kings, and Princes as the heaven is above the earth. . . . Angels and archangels stand beneath us, for we can in God's stead forgive sins. We occupy a position superior to that of the Mother of God, who only once bore Christ, whereas we create and beget Him every day. Yea, in a sense we stand above God Himself, Who must always and everywhere serve us, and at the consecration must descend from heaven upon the Mass," etc., etc.<sup>1</sup>

4. And the whole pretension is based on the dictum of an obsolete mediæval philosophy, which makes an impossible and even absurd separation between a substance and its qualities, which affirms that the qualities may remain after the physical substance to which they belong has ceased to exist, while it assumes that the body of Christ may exist in thousands upon thousands of different places at the same moment. The omnipresence of Christ's body was specifically condemned by Pope Gelasius. The dogma thus contradicts alike the testimony of the senses, and the not less emphatic testimony of the reason and intelligence.

5. The Council of Trent calls the Mass an "unbloody" sacrifice. If it is "unbloody," we have seen, it is not a repetition of the sacrifice of the Cross, which was essentially a sacrifice by blood, and it is not propitiatory, for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

6. Besides, by the dogma of transubstantiation the sacramental and symbolical character of the Eucharist is destroyed. As the twenty-eighth Article of the Church of England puts it, it "overthroweth the nature of a sacrament." The Latin Church herself distinguishes two things in every sacrament—the sign and the thing signified. But, if the elements are changed into the real body and blood of Christ, they are no longer signs or symbols, and the Lord's Supper ceases in any proper sense to be sacramental.

7. But perhaps the crowning perversion and corruption

<sup>1</sup> See Kurtz's "Church History," Vol. III., p. 248, of Hodder & Stoughton's edition.

of all is the prostration before the wafer, the little bit of bread, and offering to it the adoration due to the Most High alone. I have touched on this already, but the evil involved in it is so enormous and so glaring that its true character ought to be declared and emphasised in this closing word. If the offering to the piece of bread the same worship which is due to the Most High is not, as it was designated by the Reformers, sheer idolatry, then the heathen worship of the idol of wood or stone is not idolatry, for the intelligent heathen will tell you that he does not really worship the piece of stone or wood, but the Divinity through it.

Thus in the evolution of the sacrifice and sacrament of the altar we have found developed a huge excrescence, alien alike to the spirit and letter of the original institution, a growth drawn and nourished from pagan sources, and standing in marked and striking contrast with the simple and spiritual but sublime service instituted by our Lord. To trace, as we have endeavoured to do, the successive stages of the singular evolution, and the influences under which it proceeded, is sufficient to condemn the final product, and to suggest that stranger things have emerged in history, even ecclesiastical history, than in the wildest dreams of fiction !

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

It is evident that, following the example of the Church of the Old Covenant, as seen in the Psalms and elsewhere, confession of sin and prayer for forgiveness formed a part of the worship of the Christian Church from the beginning. The earliest Code of Discipline or Church Manual we possess, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, has this express injunction: "In the congregation thou shalt confess thy transgressions, and thou shalt not go to thy prayer with an evil conscience." Again: "On the Lord's day of the Lord, being assembled together, break bread and give thanks, after confession of our trespasses, that our sacrifice may be pure."<sup>1</sup> Thus a sense of sin and of the need of Divine forgiveness was kept alive in the hearts of the Church members. But that was not enough. The need of a faithful discipline was clearly recognised from the outset by our Lord and His apostles. In Matt. xviii. 15—18; 1 Cor. v.; 2 Cor. ii. 5—10; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14, 15; and 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26, we are taught explicitly:

Confession of sin and prayer for pardon an essential element in Christian worship.

Need of a faithful discipline also recognised;

1. That heinous offenders are to be excluded from the fellowship of the Christian community, this being necessary alike for the purity, health, and progress of the Church, and for the recovery and well-being of evil-doers themselves.

1. excluding heinous offenders from fellowship;

2. How they are to be dealt with in order to amendment and restoration is pointed out in considerable detail.

2. dealing with them in order to their restoration;

3. It is also indicated in whom the disciplinary power is vested—that it resides ultimately in the Church itself, the community of believers,<sup>2</sup> while it is administered by office-bearers, acting in its name, and with ministerial authority. The power of the keys, given to Peter,<sup>3</sup> and then to all the apostles,<sup>4</sup> is extended to the whole body of the disciples,<sup>5</sup> and is represented in 1 Cor. v. 4, compared with 2 Cor. ii. 6, as being in the hands of the assembled members of the Church. Indeed long after apostolic times the administration of discipline continued to be a judicial

3. the disciplinary power residing in the community of believers administered by office-bearers

<sup>1</sup> "Didaché," iv., 14; xiv., 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. v.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xvi. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xviii. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. John xx. 23, and Luke xxiv. 23.

act of the community under the presidency of the *probati quique seniores*.<sup>1</sup>

4. the condition of restoration being true repentance.

To substitute "penance" for "repentance" a perversion of apostolic teaching.

At first a tendency to over-severity.

Only one repentance allowed after having fallen.

4. The condition on which the offender is restored is also set forth, namely, genuine repentance.<sup>2</sup> Note that the New Testament word for repentance is *μετάνοια*, which (as Cremer shows) means a change of moral thought and feeling, involving not only sorrow for sin, but a purpose of amendment. It was a deplorable perversion of Scripture teaching which for the "repentance" of the New Testament substituted "penance," which technically suggests an external act or series of acts, such as arraying oneself in sackcloth and ashes, almsgiving, fasting, self-scourging and the like, which may or may not express genuine repentance; which suggests also *punishment* for sin (the greater the sin the longer the penance); and worst of all suggests *satisfactions* made to God for his sin by the sinner himself, teaching salvation by the sinner's own good works, and a practical denial that Christ died for our sins, and that in His death we have an all-sufficient atonement.

In the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles there was a tendency to over-severity in the discipline. The question arose early—How often might a person sin and fall and be restored again? How often can one who has fallen, after having renounced sin in baptism, again find reconciliation and restoration? The answer of our Lord Himself was: "Until seventy times seven."<sup>3</sup> And very noteworthy it is that our Lord's answer to Peter's question, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" came immediately after He had conferred on them this power of discipline, of "binding and loosing," and in connection with its bestowal. But Hermas, writing early in the second century, affirms that such an one can be allowed only "one repentance"—one re-admission to Church communion after having fallen.<sup>4</sup> And Irenæus,<sup>5</sup> Clement of Alexandria,<sup>6</sup> Tertullian,<sup>7</sup> and Origen in his fifteenth Homily on Leviticus, all refer to this rule as being accepted in the Church. The Montanists rejected a second repentance in the case of murder, idolatry, apostasy, and sins of the flesh; and the African Church, the Novatians, and the Donatists took the same ground. Even Cyprian at first held that the so-called "mortal sins"

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, "Apol.," 39.

<sup>2</sup> See 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26; 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7; vii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xviii. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Pastor, "Mand.," iv. 1, 3.

<sup>5</sup> "Adv. Haer.," iv. 27, 2. <sup>6</sup> "Strom.," ii. 13, 57. <sup>7</sup> "De Poenit.," 7.

against God, such as idolatry, blasphemy, apostasy, committed after baptism, excluded men from readmission to the Church, and from being dealt with by penitential discipline; but when, through the horrors of the Decian persecution, the lapsed became so numerous, Cyprian was induced to relax the stringency of his dealing. It was ultimately decided by the Council of Nicæa (Canons 13 and 14) that no one, whatever his offence, should in case of true penitence be refused absolution and communion when at the point of death; and that those who had lapsed should remain as *audientes* or hearers for three years, after which they might join in prayer with the catechumens.

This much relaxed by the Nicene Council.

But the most noteworthy contribution to the development of the system of penance in the Latin Church, in some respects the most important, sinister, and ominous accretion to it in the early centuries, had already been made by Cyprian's "master," Tertullian. He required that repentance should manifest itself in certain outward acts. That of course was unobjectionable, so far as the acts insisted on were real tests of reform. But he not only required that the penitents should prove the genuineness of their contrition in certain external humiliations which he specifies—in the dress they wear, in almsgivings and fastings, in self-chastenings in sackcloth and ashes, in kneelings and prostrations on the ground, in tears and sighs, in prayers and entreaties; and he not only regarded confession (*exomologesis*) as including all these: he represents these acts of humiliation as having a propitiatory virtue in God's sight to wash out the sins of those confessing. Confession in this sense, as Harnack puts it,<sup>1</sup> "underwent a transformation which in Tertullian includes a whole series of basal ideas. It is no longer a mere expression of inward feeling, confession to God, and the brethren, but is essentially a *performance*," and a performance of atoning efficacy Godwards. "It is the undertaking to satisfy God by works of self-humiliation and abnegation, which He can accept as a voluntarily endured punishment, and therefore as a substitute for the penalty that naturally awaits the sinner. It is thus a means of pacifying God, appeasing His anger, and gaining His favour again." These external humiliations Tertullian regards as "penances" in the strict sense of that word; "satisfactions to God," he calls them. He was the first to introduce that word into theology and in this connection, as he was "the first"

Important development of the system of penance made by Tertullian.

He insists on certain external acts and humiliations.

Confession includes all these which have a propitiatory virtue and take the form of a performance; a substitute for the penalty that awaits the sinner. These are "satisfactions," "penances" having the power of reconciling an angry God.

<sup>1</sup> "History of Dogma," Vol. II., Chap. III., 3, p. 110, Eng. trans.



(as Harnack points out) "who definitely regarded such ascetic performances as propitiatory offerings, and ascribed to them the '*potestas reconciliandi iratum Deum*.' " It is deeply significant, but perhaps not surprising, to find Tertullian, who was born a heathen, and remained a heathen till mature manhood, importing from an alien source—that is, from Roman civil law, in which he had been trained, and with which he was familiar—a Roman legal term, and with it a thoroughly alien and pagan doctrine, into Christian theology, a doctrine of salvation by works of human merit, in contravention of plain Scripture teaching that we are justified and saved by grace, and to the disparagement of the propitiation made by Christ. That unhappy importation of a pagan doctrine from an alien source, and profoundly at variance with the New Testament doctrine of grace, never through the whole mediæval period ceased to poison and vitiate the theology of the Church.

This pagan doctrine vitiated the theology of the Church from this date onward.

Religion, too, became too much a mere external performance.

Thus, too, religion became externalised, and was made to consist in a series of mechanical performances, without its being necessarily connected with the deeper springs of spiritual life and piety. Penances such as fastings, self-lacerations, covering oneself with sackcloth and ashes, almsgiving, pilgrimages, the manumission of slaves, the repetition of a certain number of Psalms, money payments, and the like, might be and often were performed without any real contrition or repentance behind them; and these external, perfunctory performances, devoid of any spiritual or ethical root or spring, because they were enjoined by the Church, and regarded as "propitiations" and "satisfactions" to God, passed for real piety. They were religion, in fact. It was the externalisation of religion in this sense without securing its living connection with the moral and spiritual nature which was one of the worst evils of the system.

Mortal and venial sins.

Tertullian also made a distinction, based on 1 John v. 16, between *mortal* sins and *venial* sins. Homicide, idolatry, fraud, denial of Christ, blasphemy, adultery, and fornication were the seven mortal sins, declared by him to be "*irremissibilia*" if committed after baptism.

Absolution by the bishop as God's viceregent begins to be regarded as a judicial *jure divino* act.

About the time with which we are now concerned the principle of the sacerdotal character of the clergy, and primarily of the bishop, and other kindred ideas, had taken possession of the Church. It now begins to be claimed on behalf of the bishop that, as a successor of the apostles, he is invested with full sacerdotal functions, that for the same

reason he is God's vicegerent, with authority to judge in His stead, so that his absolution of the sinner is a *jure divino* judicial act; and, as was pointed out in the first chapter of this book on "The Evolution of the Priest," one of the first, perhaps the very first, to put forward this claim, and to assert it in its most offensive form, was Callistus, whose history as "an impostor, a thief, and a knave" (as Hippolytus calls him), was there briefly sketched. The claim, we saw, was indignantly repudiated by Tertullian, who sarcastically applied the epithet "apostolic" to Callistus, and called upon him to vindicate his claim to an unlimited power to forgive sins. Tertullian admits that this power as a disciplinary and ministerial function is given to the Church, but it is "the Church of the Spirit"; while he adds: "the right and arbitrament is the Lord's; God's own, and not the priest's."<sup>1</sup>

Tertullian affirms this power to be only ministerial.

In fact the great Church leaders both of this and of a later time fully recognised that the power to forgive sin strictly belongs to God only; and that only in a way consonant with that—that is, ministerially and precatoryally—can the Church, or the office-bearers of the Church, absolve sinners. Hippolytus, equally with Tertullian, repudiates the claim of Callistus, and states expressly that the latter was the first to set up that daring pretension. Even Cyprian himself, the "father of high Churchmen," by whom the sacerdotal conception of the ministry was matured and consummated, is careful to explain the matter thus: "We do not forestall (*lit.* prejudice) the Lord's judgment; therefore, if He find the sinner's repentance true and perfect, He will ratify our decision; but if any man shall have deceived us by a feigned repentance, then may God, who will not be mocked, and who searcheth the heart, decide what we have failed to see through, and may the Lord correct the sentence of His servants."<sup>2</sup> Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, explains the function in this way: "With us the bishops and priests meet once a year to consult together for the recovery by repentance of our fallen brethren, not as though they received from us the forgiveness of sins, but that by our means they may be brought to a sense of their sins, and driven to render a more perfect satisfaction to the Lord."<sup>3</sup> Origen says<sup>4</sup>: "He on whom Jesus has breathed, as He did on His apostles, and who by his fruits can be known to have received the Holy

Most of the great Church leaders recognise this.

Even Cyprian makes no higher claim.

How Firmilian explains it.

And Origen.

<sup>1</sup> "De Pudicitia," xxi.

<sup>3</sup> See "Ep." of Cyprian, 75.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 52.

<sup>4</sup> "De Oratione," c. xxviii.

Ghost, and to have been made spiritual so as to be led by the Spirit of God, as sons are, to do what is reasonably done, remits what God remits and retains sins that are incurable, ministering to God who alone has power to remit sin, as the prophets ministered to Him in speaking not their own thoughts but the thoughts that the Divine Will commanded." Jerome on Matt. xvi. 19 describes it as pharisaic pride in a bishop or presbyter to arrogate the judicial function of forgiving sins: "*Cum apud Deum non sententia*

And  
Jerome.

And Pope  
Leo the  
Great.

So, the  
earliest  
formu-  
laries are  
prayers.

The  
formula did  
not become  
declarative  
and judicial  
till thir-  
teenth  
century, and  
not uni-  
versally  
even then.

*sacerdotum, sed reorum vita quærat.*" So far, again, is Pope Leo the Great from conferring on the priest the absolute power of forgiving sin as God's vicegerent, he only allows him to officiate as "*precator pro delictis pœnitentium.*" Accordingly, the earliest definite absolution formulæ, as in the Gelasian *Sacramentary*, are prayers recited over the penitents, accompanied by the laying on of hands. To the same effect is the *Didaskalia*, which directs the person presiding: "*huic [on the penitent] manum impones, omnibus pro eo precantibus.*"<sup>1</sup> The formula of absolution, in fact, continued precatory till after the beginning of the thirteenth century, when it became declarative and judicial. So late as the twelfth century we have Peter Lombard affirming that "God alone binds or looses sins," that the priest's power of the keys signifies only *potestas ostendendi homines ligatos vel solutos*, and the sentence of the priest was valid only in so far as it accorded with the sentence of God.<sup>2</sup> William of Auvergne, Bishop of Paris, who died in 1249, writes that "the confessor does not, like a secular judge, say, 'I absolve thee,' but he prays over the penitent for God's forgiveness and grace."<sup>3</sup> But the distinction thus theoretically recognised both in early and in later times soon came to be practically disregarded.

Even in theory it was not accepted by all. The view that the priest's absolution was virtually the same as God's found expression in a tractate ascribed to Augustine, and was embodied in a decree of Gratian. Hugo St. Victor, who died in 1141, attributed to the absolution of the priest exemption from the punishment of eternal death; and Richard St. Victor put on record a similar view. Hence the enormous value attached to priestly absolution, so that we have Pope Innocent III. at the fourth Lateran Council (1215) issuing a Canon to the effect that all Christians, as soon as they have reached the age of discretion, should con-

Owing to  
the value  
attached to  
priestly  
absolution  
Innocent  
III. in 1215  
issued a  
Canon re-  
quiring all  
Christians

<sup>1</sup> "Didask.," ii., 40, 41.

<sup>2</sup> "Sentent.," Lib. IV., Dict. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Robertson, "Church Hist.," iii., 612.

fess all their sins to their priest at least once a year, in order that he may impose on them appropriate "satisfactions," and that they may obtain the benefit of his absolution.

to confess  
at least  
once a year.

But we must return to the early period. In the third century the form and duration of the penances or "satisfactions" are still left in a great measure to the Church and the clergy. The *Apostolical Constitutions* permit the restoration of a penitent after two or three or five or seven weeks' fasting. After Tertullian and the Montanist influence the discipline became more severe, although it does not seem to have exceeded a period of one or two years. But at the opening of the fourth century, largely no doubt through the influence of Novatianism, the discipline (as we learn from the Canons of the Council of Ancyra) became more austere and rigid, and the duration of the penance longer, with a much more elaborate system of penitential discipline. The penitents are by that Council divided into four classes, according to the progress they have made in fitness to be received into the fellowship of the Church, and corresponding with these four classes were the four "penitential stations" or stages (*βαθμοί*), each station marking the point at which the penitent had arrived in his course of discipline.

Duration  
of the  
penances.

Four  
classes of  
penitents.

The first class is designated the "weepers" (*προσκλαίοντες* or *flentes*), who are not permitted to enter the church at all, but remain outside the doors, clad in mourning garments, pleading in tears with clergy and people as they enter for restoration to the Church.

1. Weepers.

The second class is called the "hearers" (*audientes* or *ἀκροώμενοι*), who were permitted to listen, along with the catechumens or unbaptised, in the outer area of the church, to the sermon and the Scripture lessons.

2. Hearers.

Next were the "kneelers" (*substrati* or *ὑποπίπτοντες*), who were admitted to the public prayers, but only in a kneeling posture, and were still excluded from communion.

3. Kneelers.

And finally, there were the "standers" or "bystanders" (*consistentes* or *συνιστάμενοι*), who were admitted *standing* to the prayers and the other parts of the worship, only they were barred from communion. The Council of Ancyra (314) decreed that those Christians who in the Decian persecution had been forced to sacrifice to the gods and to partake of the sacred feasts shall remain one year amongst the *audientes*, three years among the *substrati*, shall take part in the prayers for two years, and then finally be admitted to communion.

4. Standers.

By the ninth Canon of the same Council, those who had not only apostatised, but had become the enemies of their brethren and compelled them to apostatise, shall remain for three years among the *audientes*, then six years with the *substrati*; they shall then take part in the prayers for one year, and not till after the expiration of ten years shall they receive full communion; and their conduct during all this time shall be carefully watched. Basil assigns twenty years to a murderer, four of these to be spent among the "weepers"; for manslaughter eleven years, two of these among the "weepers"; for adultery fifteen years, four among the "weepers." One Canon requires an apostate to spend the remainder of his life as a "weeper"—that is, outside the church doors, and without admission to any of its services. At the third stage, the penitent was clothed in sackcloth, with ashes sprinkled on the head, in the case of a woman with hair dishevelled, and face and hands unwashed. At the same time other penances were imposed, such as a sordid garb, fastings, self-lacerations, abstinence from the bath, and from all luxury.

Hitherto the sins dealt with in the penitential discipline were for the most part public offences, scandals, with regard to which public confession was made before the church, or secret sins, which the sinners themselves spontaneously confessed. But as the publicity of the penitential procedure tended to frighten away transgressors from confession, the need soon began to be felt for a more private tribunal before which offenders might appear; and so, early in the fourth century, a special presbyter, called a "presbyter of repentance," was put in charge of the duty of confession and absolution, and of graduating the amount and character of the penance to be undergone, and adjusting it to the sin of the offender, and doing all this in a less public manner. But, a great scandal having been caused in the Church at Constantinople by the crime of a deacon, the office was abolished by the Patriarch Nectarius about 390, in the Eastern Church the whole penitential system was relaxed, the performance of penance fell greatly into disuse, and (as Sozomen records) each one was left to his own conscience with regard to the participation of the sacred mysteries.<sup>1</sup>

In the West Augustine laid down the principle that secret sins might be confessed secretly, but the more open and deadly sins required formal and public treatment.<sup>2</sup>

In fourth century "a presbyter of repentance" put in charge of the penitents.

The penitential system relaxed in the East.

Augustine thought open sins required public treatment; but Leo the Great for-

<sup>1</sup> Sozomen, "Eccles. Hist.," vii., 16; Socrates, ditto, v., 19.

<sup>2</sup> Sermo 82, c. 7.

Leo the Great, on the other hand, forbade penitents to read publicly before the congregation a written confession, and said it was enough to confess their sin first to God and then in private to the priest, through whose mediation and supplication forgiveness could be obtained,<sup>1</sup> although Leo does not confer on the priest the absolute power of forgiving sin as God's vicegerent; he is simply (as we have seen) "*precator pro delictis pœnitentium*." Here, however, in Leo's deliverance we have the germ of auricular confession. Nearly about the same time John Cassian refers to sinful dispositions and desires as included in the province of the confession to be made to the priest. About the year 473 Pope Simplicius established a penitentiary at Rome where confession was made in private; and after this date public confession became rarer. At the fourth Lateran Council (A.D. 1215) Pope Innocent III. had the obligation of the confession of all sins raised into a dogma, and all the faithful are, under a threat of excommunication, required to make confession of all their sins at least once a year; while the Synod of Toulouse (1229) made confession compulsory three times a year, namely, at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. When by the schoolmen penance was constituted a sacrament, including three elements: "contrition," "auricular confession," and "satisfaction" [and "absolution" by the priest in the capacity of judge ("*ego absolvo te*") immediately followed confession]; the institution of auricular confession, with the evils and abuses inseparably connected therewith, was fully and finally consummated; and the withdrawal of the veil from the whole inner and most intimate private life of the penitent was made possible to the priest.

An ordinary sense of self-respect and of the sacred and inviolable character of the inner private life of the individual leads him naturally to recoil from and resent the intrusion of another into its inner privacies and secrets. There were, however, two circumstances which made the intrusion of the priest possible into the innermost secrets, the Holy of Holies, of the personality. One was the fact that the sense of individuality and independence was in the mediæval period less strong than it is now, the individual being then more merged in the multitude; and the other was the profound superstitious feeling entertained with regard to the supernatural authority and power of the priest, especially the prerogative of absolution from the guilt and

bade open confession before the congregation.

Here we have the germ of auricular confession.

A penitentiary established at Rome in 473 where confession made in private; public confession henceforward rarer.

Confession of all sins at least once a year made obligatory by Innocent III.

Three times a year by the Synod of Toulouse in 1229.

When penance became a sacrament with three elements: contrition, auricular confession (followed by absolution) and satisfaction; auricular confession became an established institution

Made possible by two causes:

1. The sense of independence less strong then than now.
2. Superstitious belief in power of the priest.

<sup>1</sup> "Ep.," 136.

eternal punishment of sin claimed by him. Thus armed, the most sacred deeps and intimacies of the private personal and family life were rudely invaded by him; the natural instinct of reserve with regard to them was set at nought in the confessional; a region which should be sacred as a sanctuary, as immune from invasion as the Holy of Holies, as secure and safe from the encroachment of an outsider as the most carefully guarded citadel, was wantonly violated; and, under the guise of a spiritual privilege, a power which might be made the instrument of a cruel and intolerable tyranny was usurped by the priest.

His claim a usurpation of the prerogatives of the Almighty.

(a) The claim to intrude into the intimacies of private life.

(b) The claim to forgive sin.

Reasons against auricular confession.

His double claim (a) to break through the veil that protects the shrine of the inner private life, and (b) to absolve as a judge on his tribunal from sin and its punishment, is in fact a daring and audacious usurpation of a two-fold prerogative of the Almighty. No mere man has the right to intrude into the secret intimacies of private or domestic life. Hence the claim set up for priests that they are actually divine. The catechism of the Council of Trent<sup>1</sup> affirms that "they are deservedly called not only angels, but even Gods, because they hold amongst us the power and divinity of the immortal God." But even Bellarmine, Rome's greatest controversialist, admits that "the secret confession of all our sins is not only *not* instituted or commanded *jure divino* (by God's law), but it was not so much as received into use in the ancient Church of God."<sup>2</sup> To no mere man, again, be he priest, or parson, or Pope, belongs the prerogative of forgiving sin.<sup>3</sup> To invest the priest with such a double prerogative is to put a power into his hands to which no human being is entitled. It is to put the deepest secrets of the household—secrets which the wife shrinks from telling to her husband, which the husband shrinks from disclosing to his wife, which the daughter cannot bear to reveal even to her mother—at the mercy of a man who is often ignorant, coarse, indelicate and vulgar. In spite of the strong and emphatic admission of Bellarmine, for any one, woman or man, to conceal anything from the priest in confession is a mortal sin. With what horrible and terrific power, a power which, as I have said, may be made the means of a pitiless, oppressive and insufferable tyranny over the people, is the priest, who may be narrow-minded, coarse-fibred, selfish and unscrupulous, thus invested! Even the seal of silence he is under not to

<sup>1</sup> Part II., quest. 7, Chap. II.

<sup>2</sup> "De Perit.," Lib. III., c. i.

<sup>3</sup> Dan. ix. 9; Mark ii. 7.

make known what is disclosed in confession may become essential treason to the interests of the State and of morality in the concealment of murder and other crimes revealed to him in the confessional; while the questions put by him as confessor, and the answers elicited, are in many cases calculated to do serious harm both to the confessor himself and to his victim. The obscene suggestions, hints, allusions, and insinuations found in books for the guidance of the priest in the confessional must inevitably tend to stain and defile the consciousness and sear the conscience of both the confessor and the confessed, and may minister to evil passion and sin in both. Enough is known of the history of the confessional to prove that these are not mere imaginary possibilities. "O how many priests," says Liguori, "who before were innocent have lost both God and their soul!"<sup>1</sup> Even Popes before now have found it necessary to issue Bulls against the abuses and corruptions of the confessional. Well might Augustine say in his *Confessions*, "What have I to do with men that they should hear my confessions, as if they could 'heal my infirmities'?" A set of men curious to inquire into the lives of others, slow to amend their own? And how shall they who know nothing of my heart, but through my confession, know whether I say what is true or not?"<sup>2</sup> He resolves, accordingly, to make his confession to the Lord Himself, and cries, "Do Thou, my inmost Physician, make plain unto me what fruit I may pluck from this action."

But to return to the point in the history at which this digression with regard to auricular confession began. As time went on the penitential system became more elaborate; the number and variety of "penances" or "satisfactions" were greatly multiplied; the prescription and imposition of "satisfactions" fell more and more into the hands of the priest, and to avoid the risk of these being unsuitable, or arbitrary, or unjust, penitential books were compiled, containing lists of sins, such as idolatry, murder, fornication, drunkenness, avarice, perjury, etc., with their appropriate penal satisfactions; the period of penance, or exclusion from Church privileges, extending over two, five, seven, ten, fifteen or twenty years, and in some cases, as we have seen, to the end of life. There are penitentials bearing the names of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, Beda, Egbert, Columbanus, Cumin and others, and what is known

Penitential books compiled, with lists of sins and their appropriate satisfactions.

<sup>1</sup> "Moral Theology," Vol. IX., p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> "Confessions," Book X., c. 3.



as the *Roman Penitential*. The materials for their composition were derived from various sources, such as the writings of the Fathers, and the Canons at Councils.

The system of indulgences: its evolution.

At first the exchanges reasonable enough.

Then we have a system of commuting penances for money payments.

Some of the various forms which the indulgences took.

But we come now to a much more momentous development—the evolution of the system of *indulgences*. The steps that led to the full-blown system were gradual, and at first natural and reasonable enough. Early in the history there were cases in which it was found expedient to exchange the penances or “satisfactions” imposed at first for others; as, for example, where a period of fasting had been originally enjoined, but where the penitent had fallen seriously ill, it was found desirable and necessary, if life was not to be imperilled, to exchange the fasting for some other exercise less injurious to health. In such exchanges or mitigations of penances we have the earliest germs of the institution of “indulgences.” They were, however, soon extended in a way less excusable and more perilous to moral character. From the seventh century onwards a regular system of commuting penances for a money payment was begun. It seems to have been derived from the Teutonic custom of accepting a money fine as a composition even for the crime of murder, and other crimes. In like manner, a period of fasting of several years’ duration might be commuted into the repetition of a certain number of prayers or psalms, or the giving of alms (in the case of a person of large means), or, following the example of the *Wehrgeld* of the Germanic codes, the payment of a fine in money. In one of the penitentials an offender is ordered to go on pilgrimage for ten years, or to live on bread and water for two years, or to pay twelve shillings a year. A penitent who visited some church, and gave an offering to its funds, had the “satisfaction” imposed on him reduced by a seventh, a third, or a half, as the case might be.<sup>1</sup> It is laid down in so many words in the penitential books that longer fasts may be replaced by shorter ones in consideration of the payment of a sum of money. At the Synod of Tribur (895) a Canon was passed permitting the reduction of a longer period of fasting for a pecuniary consideration, or the feeding of three poor persons for a given time. A person guilty of slaying a man in revenge was subjected to a seven or ten years’ penance, which might be reduced by a half by a pecuniary payment to the relatives of the slain person.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Hefele’s “History of Christian Councils,” iv., 117, 530.

<sup>2</sup> See Archbishop Theodore’s “Penitential,” i., 3, 4, 7, in Haddan and Stubbs, iii., 179, 180, 211.

Pope Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), in virtue of his supreme authority, granted forgiveness of sins to all the adherents of Rudolf of Suabia, the opponent of Gregory's great antagonist, Henry IV. Pope Urban II., at the Synod of Clermont in 1095, promised a plenary indulgence to all who would assume the Cross in the first crusade—the earliest instance on record of a plenary indulgence—in the form of a full remission of all penances that had been imposed on them. The terrible and notorious relaxation of morals in the vast majority of the crusaders affords a suggestive commentary on the practice of "indulgences." Preachers of the crusades boasted that the greatest criminals, the moment they took the Cross, were freed from crime and its penalty; for one curious outcome of the system was that of the so-called "Penny Preachers," who in preaching the "indulgences" held out and flaunted before their audiences the most audacious promises. "From the beginning of the fourteenth century they (indulgences) were given to raise recruits for the Papal wars. They were lavished on the religious orders either for the benefit of the members, or for the purpose of attracting strangers and their gifts to their churches. They were bestowed upon cathedrals and other churches or on individual altars in churches, and had the effect of endowments. They were attached to special collections of relics, to be earned by the faithful who visited the shrines where they were kept. They were given to hospitals, and for the upkeep of bridges and roads."<sup>1</sup> The custom referred to by Dr. Lindsay of granting indulgences to privileged churches dates from Benedict IX., one of the most profligate of the Popes, who issued a plenary indulgence, that is, the entire remission of the grossest sins, on condition of confession to a priest.<sup>2</sup>

In the "penitential redemptions," as they were called, we see the depth of corruption and debasement to which the New Testament idea of repentance had fallen. It is pointed out, for example, in the penitential books, how a rich man may be absolved from a penance of seven years in three days without any inconvenience to himself except the disbursement of a sum of money. Another abuse of the system was what may be called "penance by proxy."

Penitential  
redemptions  
and their  
abuses.

<sup>1</sup> Lindsay's "History of the Reformation in Germany," p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> See Hardwick's "Church History—Middle Age," p. 201, note, ed. 1877. (Many to-day believe this indulgence not to be genuine. In any case Urban II., mentioned above, did issue such an indulgence some fifty years later.)

A rich man who did not regard expense could have long years of penance worked out in a few days by means of the numerous serfs dependent on him. A thrall to whom liberty is assured as a reward can work out the penance due by his wealthy master. It is significant of much that the word "*pœnitentia*" (penitence) was translated by the word "*bussa*," which meant a compensation or fine, and that in the penitential rules "*jejunare*" (to fast) is habitually employed as an equivalent for "*pœnitere*" (to repent). How perverted and distorted the idea of penitence has become when in the case of men of wealth a money payment could be made a substitute for real repentance, and could be regarded as an atonement for sin! No wonder such perversions and corruptions were denounced by the more honest and discerning; no wonder we have men like Abelard censuring the avarice of the priests, who do not observe *quid velit Dominus sed quid valeat nummus*, or like the abbot Stephen, who, when the bishop on the laying of the foundation stone of a church issued letters with copious indulgences, indignantly refused to take part in the ceremony because what God alone could give was extolled as an act of priestly beneficence.<sup>1</sup>

The privilege of issuing indulgences taken from the bishops, and appropriated by the Popes themselves. But the abuses as great as ever.

Pope Innocent III. endeavoured to limit the custom of issuing indulgences by the bishops at the consecration of churches and on similar occasions; and, in fact, the privilege was taken from the bishops, and kept in the hands of the Popes themselves, but without any real improvement—often indeed with more flagrant abuses, for the Popes continued the practice on a larger scale. See, for example, the plenary indulgence granting *plenissimam omnium suorum peccatorum veniam*, offered in 1300 by Boniface VIII. to all who for certain days should worship at the tombs of Peter and Paul and make liberal offerings. It was the means of replenishing the depleted coffers of Boniface. The "pardonier," so graphically described by Chaucer, with his "wallet brimful of pardons brought from Rome all hot," became a recognised emissary and representative of the Roman pontiffs in the fourteenth century. An inexhaustible supply of pardons for both the living and the dead, without any qualifying limitations of their import and effect, was sold by "vagrant commissaries, chiefly friars, like so many articles of food; 'redemption' for the sins not only of the buyer, but of families, and even districts, being advertised for sale by public auction, and made

<sup>1</sup> Gieseler, ii., 2, 505, note.

purchaseable in advance.”<sup>1</sup> The abuses of this impious and shameful traffic in vicarious pardons culminated in the career of John Tetzel, the Dominican monk, part of the produce of whose sales was to be used in building the Basilica of St. Peter’s at Rome, but whose splendid initial success was so rudely interrupted by Luther.

But it may be asked, How were the Popes enabled to offer such wholesale remissions to transgressors? The question brings us to one of the most singular inventions of mediæval times—that of a *surplus treasury of merit*. As a basis for the doctrine of indulgences, or the remission of penalties, the schoolmen, Alexander of Hales and Albertus Magnus, in the thirteenth century, devised the fiction of a treasury of supererogatory merit, amassed by the good works of the saints, such that, by virtue of the unity of the members of the mystical body of Christ, and the fact that the members of the body are members of one another, the meritorious works of all belong to each, and so the more sinful can benefit by the superfluous merit of the more saintly. This imaginary storehouse of surplus merit has been put in charge of the Pope by the Almighty, to be dispensed by him for the pardon of such unforgiven sinners as he may select, and as may pay well for the boon. The theory was still further polished and perfected by Thomas Aquinas and other schoolmen; and by the development now consummated the surplus treasury of merit was made available not only for the living; the dominion of the sacerdotal order was by a happy stroke extended to the regions of the dead. Thomas of Aquino utilised the fiction of a surplus treasury of merit to extend indulgences to souls still suffering the temporal penalties of sin in Purgatory. The idea of a place of punishment and discipline between death and the resurrection, in which sins may be atoned for, was unknown in the apostolic and early Church. Tertullian indeed had spoken of oblations for the dead on their memorial days; and later still Augustine suggested that the souls of the departed might be comforted by the piety of their surviving friends when the sacrifice of the Mediator is offered for them, and alms given on their behalf.<sup>2</sup> He had just said in the previous sentence that during the time that intervenes between a man’s death and the final resurrection the soul dwells in a hidden retreat, where it enjoys rest or suffers affliction in proportion to the merit it has earned in the life on earth. But the doctrine of an

The surplus  
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schoolmen.

Its adva-  
tages ex-  
tended to  
souls in  
Purgatory.

<sup>1</sup> Hardwick;

<sup>2</sup> “Enchiridion ad Laur.,” c. 110.

"ignis purgatorius" he speaks of as "not incredible, but always questionable." This doctrine of a purgatorial fire was, however, made an established dogma by Pope Gregory the Great (590—604), although he based it chiefly on the testimony of disembodied spirits! He taught that by the intercession of the living for the dead, and the sacrifices of the Mass offered on their behalf, their purgatorial pains would be abated. "The wood and the hay and the stubble" of 1 Cor. iii. 12 represent, according to Gregory, the lesser sins which must be destroyed by fire! A characteristic piece of exegesis. But now the doctrine of Purgatory is still more fully elaborated by the schoolmen.

The five abodes in the invisible world.

In the invisible world, according to Thomas Aquinas, there are five abodes—heaven, hell, the *limbus* of infants dying unbaptised, the *limbus patrum*, that is, the abode of Old Testament saints, and Purgatory for souls still subject to the temporal punishment for sin. The extension of the benefit of indulgences to the domain of Purgatory by abridging its temporal penalties has been truly described as "one of the most baleful innovations" in connection with the system of penance, and it was consummated and perfected by Thomas Aquinas and other schoolmen, by whom penance was now raised to the position of a sacrament.

The schoolmen not agreed as to what constitutes a sacrament.

Even among the schoolmen there was much difference of opinion as to what was required to constitute a sacrament, so that the number of the sacraments remained long undetermined. Radbert acknowledged only two; Rabanus Maurus, four; Abelard and Hugo of St. Victor, five; Cardinal Damiani had no less than twelve; but Peter Lombard and Aquinas fixed the number at seven, including penance in the list. Although this was widely accepted, it was not confirmed by ecclesiastical ordinance till 1439 at the Council of Florence. The three elements in the sacrament of penance were *contrition* of heart, *confession* by the mouth, and *satisfaction* by works. In the sacrament *absolution* immediately followed *confession*, and came before the *satisfaction* imposed by the priest. It was now held that the "absolution" which followed "confession" had the effect of cancelling the guilt of sin—mortal sin—committed since baptism, and now confessed to the priest, and with the guilt of sin the whole eternal punishment due to sin. By the "confession" and the "absolution" following, the sin, in itself mortal, is reduced to being venial, and can now be atoned for by the penances or works

Penance made a sacrament, with noteworthy changes.

of satisfaction which the priest imposes. But here again the system of indulgences offered an assured method of easing conscience, and escaping punishment. If, however, as may very well happen, these temporal penalties are not all paid, and satisfaction fully made in this life—and no one can ever be certain that they are—they must be endured in Purgatory, and for their abatement there the treasury of supererogatory merit is available.

When penance was thus raised to the rank and dignity of a sacrament, with the changes just indicated, it seemed as if the copestone was laid upon the system. But about the same time another sinister addition was made to it. Prior to the thirteenth century it had been held, at least theoretically, that *contrition* was an essential element in the discipline, as it constituted the first of the three ingredients of the sacrament of penance. But Alexander of Hales and Bonaventura (thirteenth century) drew a distinction between true contrition, or "godly sorrow," and sorrow arising from a less worthy cause, such as the fear of hell. This inferior sort of penitence was called "*attrition*," which, although imperfect in itself, might be perfected through confession and absolution. "*Attrition*" in this way really assists the person confessing, fitting and preparing him for obtaining the grace of God in the sacrament. It was felt, however, that such an inferior sort of sorrow, though sufficient to secure absolution, deserved more temporal punishment than in the case of genuine contrition, or godly sorrow; but that the temporal penalties still due could be paid by the subject of discipline himself in performing the penances or satisfactions imposed on him by the priest, especially when supplemented by such indulgences and contributions from the treasury of surplus merit as he might manage to procure. And any penalties remaining over undischarged when this life is ended—and he can never be sure that there are none—he is left to expiate in Purgatory, although here also he may get assistance in expiating them through indulgences, and the precious never-to-be-forgotten treasury of merit, of which the Pope holds the key.

Another development: an inferior sort of penitence called "*attrition*" may secure absolution.

Such a method of relief was of course hailed with warm welcome by the careless, indifferent, and irreligious members of the Church, who knew that their sorrow for sin was not of the genuine sort, but who did not wish to part with their sins or their pleasures. How admirably calculated such teaching was to lower the standard of morality, to

The substitution of "*attrition*" for "*contrition*" welcomed by the careless and irreligious.

deaden the consciences of men, and to inflict an irreparable blow on genuine spiritual religion! How utterly at variance with the evangelical doctrine of the New Testament! It may not be amiss here to give some example of the evils connected with indulgences by quoting what Lord Acton, himself a member of the Latin Church, says of Pope Alexander VI., one of the Borgias. Lord Acton says: "In order to make money by indulgences, Alexander claimed jurisdiction over the other world. When the jubilee of 1500 was celebrated, he was advised that it would produce far more if it was made applicable to the dead. Divines reported that this power was included in the Pope's prerogative. Sixtus IV. had attempted to restrain this superstition, but Alexander allowed it to prevail, and the idea that the release of a soul could be insured by a mass at a particular altar became in his time the recognised belief in Rome. It was supposed that the last two kings of Portugal had died under sentence of excommunication. The Pope gave them posthumous absolution on condition that their successor discharged their debts to the Church. It was he who simplified and cheapened the deliverance of souls in Purgatory and instituted the practices which Arcimboldi and Prierias in an evil hour set themselves to defend. The Mass was not held necessary; to visit the churches did as well. Neither confession nor contrition was required, but *only money*. It came to be the official doctrine that a soul flew up to heaven as fast as the money chinked in the box. Whoso questioned the rightfulness of the system was declared a heretic."<sup>1</sup>

Summing  
up.

We have seen how at every step in the long-drawn-out evolution the Church of Rome gets farther and farther away from New Testament teaching, foisting on its adherents a series of new and alien doctrines and practices which are not only totally destitute of Scriptural support, but directly subversive of its fundamental principles, including the essential principles of morality. In the teaching of Rome, baptism secures forgiveness of all original and actual sin prior to the observance of the rite. But practically there are none who do not fall into both venial and mortal sins after baptism. How are these to be blotted out? Pride, covetousness, unchastity, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth—these are all mortal sins according to the theology

<sup>1</sup> Lord Acton's "Historical Essays and Studies," p. 78. It may be added that Lord Acton supports every statement he makes here by reference to unquestionable authorities.

of the Latin Church. How are they and sins of all kinds committed after baptism to be cancelled? The answer of that Church is—through the sacrament of penance. In the doctrine of penance we have provided the means of forgiveness, of justification, of salvation in the Roman Church. Penance is declared by the Council of Trent to be as necessary to salvation for mortal sins committed after baptism, as baptism is for those not regenerated. Penance has, therefore, been called "the second plank" in the Roman method of salvation, baptism being the first plank. It has been designated "a laborious kind of baptism," which does for sins after the administration of the rite what baptism does for all sins prior to it, only with vastly more pain and labour to the person undergoing it. It is in the sacrament of penance, in fact, that we find the real doctrine of expiation of sin, of justification, *i.e.*, the practical working system of salvation in the Latin Church.

Such is the caricature which that Church has made of the simple penitential discipline which the New Testament inculcates; such the travesty which she substitutes for the Christian doctrine of salvation by grace. The teaching of the New Testament that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," that "in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace," that "by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, for it is the gift of God," that "we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"—teaching expressed in a multitude of forms, and in the most unambiguous language—Rome has had the courage to subvert and set aside, and to put in its place an elaborate system of justification and salvation by works of human merit.



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XIII

### THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

The seven sacraments.

IN the early Church the word "sacrament," just like the word "mystery," was used in a somewhat general sense to designate almost every sort of sacred or religious rite, especially when there was something symbolic about it. The implications which the word carries in it when applied to "Baptism" and "the Lord's Supper" are different, and go much deeper than that general sense of the word. Augustine defined a "sacrament" as "the visible sign of an invisible grace," while Hugo St. Victor and Peter the Lombard held that a Christian sacrament must have been instituted by Christ, as well as being the visible image of the grace of which it was the sign. As these principles were generally accepted as just and fundamental, it is no wonder that the Church was a long time before it was agreed what (if any) new sacrament should be added to the two which were almost universally regarded as unique and pre-eminent, and, as Augustine called them, "chief." Even among the schoolmen opinion greatly varied as to the number of the sacraments. As we have just seen, not a few held to the two "chief" sacraments, and were satisfied with these. Some succeeded in making out three, some four, and some five. The pseudo-Dionysius (sixth century) got as far as six, but he was far outstripped by Damiani, the friend of Gregory VII. (or perhaps more correctly Nicholas of Clairvaux), who managed to find twelve.

But for a long time even among the schoolmen the state of theological thought with regard to what should be considered sacraments was inchoate, chaotic. Anything of a symbolical import was sure to be put among the sacraments by some one. How did it come to pass that ultimately the number was fixed at seven? It was largely due to accident. The first theologian of mark to suggest seven appears to have been Peter the Lombard, who gave this as the number in his *Book of Sentences*. Peter soon came into great vogue with a multitude of followers, who took him as their theological master and guide, adopting

among the rest his view as to the number of the sacraments. Then came Alexander of Hales and Albertus Magnus, who with Thomas of Aquino and Bonaventura practically became dictators in theology. They endorsed and emphasised the seven of the Lombard, and from that date the general acceptance of the seven as the correct number was assured. Who was to contradict these mighty doctors? It was not, however, until the date of the Council of Florence in 1439 that this number had put upon it the stamp of official ecclesiastical sanction. And the Council of Trent clinched the matter by pronouncing an anathema on any one who denied any of "the sacraments of the new law." The seven sacraments thus solemnly authorised and established were—baptism, confirmation, the Lord's Supper, penance, extreme unction, marriage, and orders (ordination). The Divine origin of several of them had been seriously denied, but the representation that they all came from Christ was by the Council of Trent raised into a dogma. "If any one affirms that all the sacraments of the new law have not been instituted by Christ—let him be anathema." <sup>1</sup> It is not my purpose to follow in detail the developments which took place in connection with the four so-called "sacraments" which have not yet been discussed. A word or two with regard to each by way of elucidation will suffice.

When  
officially  
sanctioned.

1. *Confirmation.* In the early Church the candidate for baptism was anointed on the forehead, ears, eyes, nose, and breast, perhaps with reference to his being admitted by baptism to the priesthood of all believers. The custom continued in the Greek Church; but in the West, from the time of Cyprian, the anointing and the laying on of hands were separated from baptism, to be performed by the bishop in what came to be called "confirmatio." <sup>2</sup> The reason for the change was that the prerogative of anointing and laying on of hands and communication of the Holy Spirit belonged exclusively to the bishop as successor of the apostles.

Confirma-  
tion.

2. *Extreme Unction.* In the earlier centuries the sick anointed themselves with oil consecrated by the bishop for use in baptism (chrism), or blessed by some saint or martyr, or taken from a lamp which had been placed upon the grave of a saint or martyr. Or the unction might be done by a priest. Cæsarius of Arles required the sick to come with their holy oil to the church, to receive the Communion, and then to apply the oil, when not only their bodies would be healed

Extreme  
unction.

<sup>1</sup> Sess. vii., Can. i.

<sup>2</sup> Acts viii. 17.

but their sins blotted out. In the eighth century Boniface had it brought about that the unction should be performed by a priest. The Gelasian and Gregorian *Sacramentaries* represent the oil as simply healing and remedial in its effect ; but at the next stage in the evolution the *healing* falls into the background, and the chief place is taken by the *remission of sins* ; and thus the meaning and purpose of James<sup>1</sup> are completely altered. And another change soon followed. Hitherto the anointing of the sick might be often repeated ; henceforth it could take place *only once*, and so become *extreme unction*, designed for those supposed to be dying, a *viaticum* for departing souls. According to Albertus Magnus the rite served to cleanse away the *reliquiæ peccatorum*, to remove any remaining fault or weakness, any lingering dislike of goodness. The form of administration finally fixed on was the anointing of eyes, ears, nose, mouth, as well as (except in the case of women) the feet and loins with holy oil. It was not till after the ninth century that the rite was raised to the rank of a sacrament. It need not be added that in being so raised it had completely left behind the design and purpose intended by the apostle James.

Orders.

3. *Ordination*. According to Thomas Aquinas there are seven orders, but they are all minor orders except bishops, priests and deacons. But the noteworthy thing here is that ordination to the priesthood by the bishop conveys sacerdotal authority, and the grace necessary for the discharge of his sacerdotal duties by the priest. It is only they who are thus ordained by the bishop who are qualified to dispense the sacraments, and to minister grace and salvation to the people. There is absolutely no support for this in the New Testament. Ordination, too, imparts an indelible character to the soul of the ordained. It is rather singular by the way, in this connection, that Thomas Aquinas practically followed Jerome in his view of the relation between the bishop and the priest—that they are of the same order, and differ only in office.

Though not strictly in place, a few sentences may be added here from Lagarde with regard to the *tonsure*. He says: "The tonsure is of pagan origin. The priests of Isis and of Serapis shaved the head. It was from them that the Christian clergy borrowed the tonsure ; or rather, they borrowed it from the monks. About the end of the fourth century the latter began to imitate the priests of

<sup>1</sup> James v. 14.

Isis. At the beginning of the sixth century the tradition was created; the tonsure formed an integral part of the monastic state. It was then that it was adopted by the clergy. At the end of the sixth century the work of causing its adoption was complete; every one of the clergy was obliged to have the tonsure. Consequently it was through the monks that the tonsure passed from the priests of Isis to the Christian priests."<sup>1</sup>

4. *Marriage* is a sacrament, it is alleged, because it has been represented as a symbol of the mystical union between Christ and His Church. To which it may be replied that many things may be and are symbols of Christ and of the believers' relation with Christ which are not therefore sacraments, and not instituted by Him, as baptism and the Lord's Supper were. And this undoubtedly applies to marriage. It is suggestive that in the passage with regard to marriage,<sup>2</sup> for "this is a great mystery," the Vulgate has "*sacramentum hoc magnum est.*" Matrimony.

The truth is, the things of which we have been writing are not Christian sacraments at all. They have not been instituted by Christ; they are not, except in the case of marriage, Divine institutions in any proper sense of the word, but, as observed by the Latin Church, accretions and additions and corruptions which came, most of them, centuries after the time of Christ. Can any one say of penance—the final product, whose evolution we have traced through the history—or of "extreme unction," or even of "the sacrifice and sacrament of the Altar," as the Latin Church has finally evolved it, that they are institutions of Christ in any proper sense? The farther we have followed them we have found them farther and farther away from Christ, more alien to the spirit and genius of the Christian religion, more deeply and richly imbued with the spirit and genius of the pagan cults.

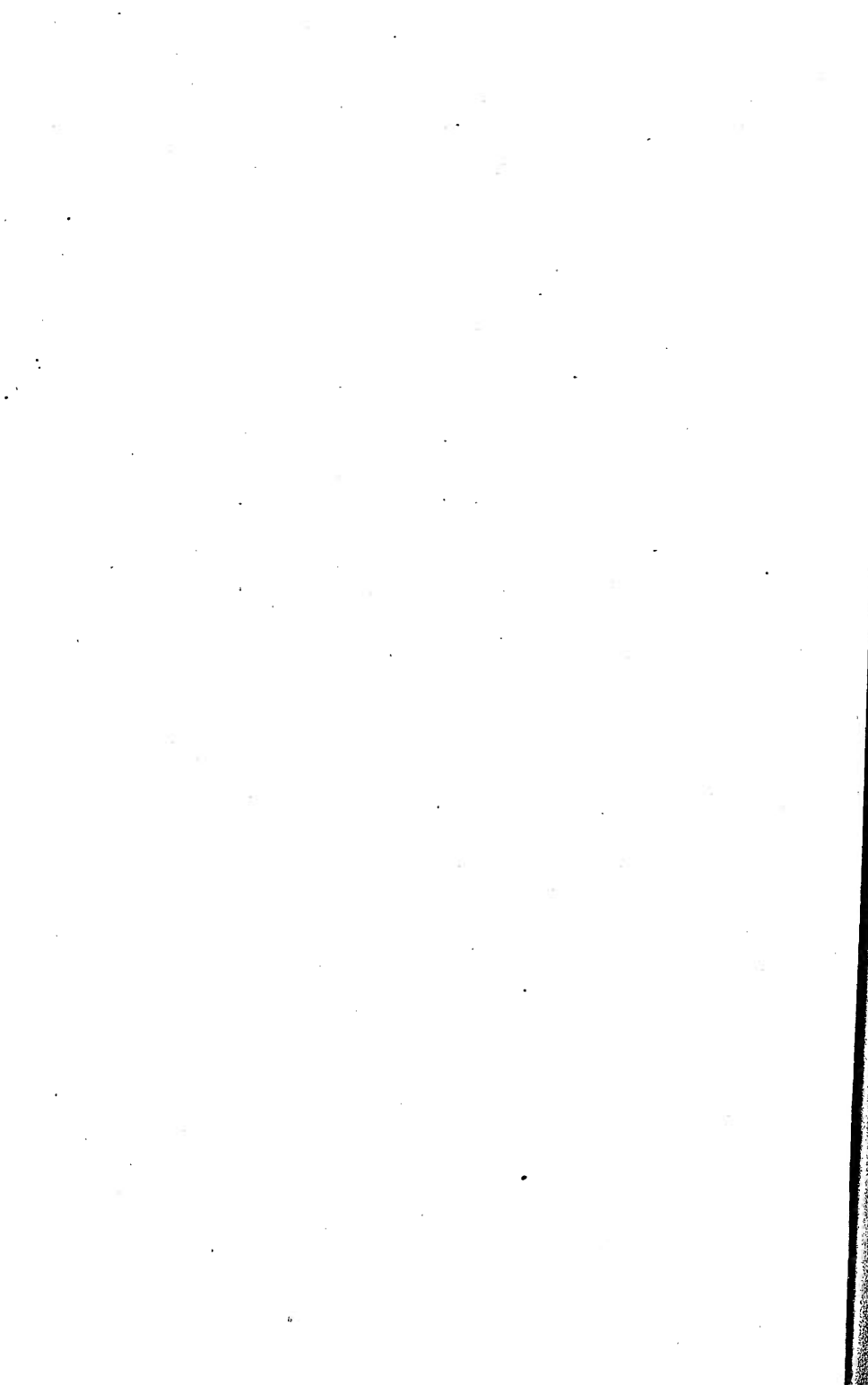
<sup>1</sup> Lagarde's "Latin Church in the Middle Ages," p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. v. 32.



## **BOOK III**

**WORSHIP MATERIALISED AND MATTER  
DEIFIED**



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRACTICE OF PILGRIMAGES TO HOLY PLACES

NEITHER the Founder of Christianity nor His apostles, in the new order inaugurated by them, attached any peculiar sanctity to one place above another. "The hour cometh," said Jesus, "when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit ; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Even in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles of the New Testament we find no trace of the feeling that regards Jerusalem or Bethlehem or Nazareth or the shore of the sea of Galilee as exceptionally "holy," as making worship more acceptable, or as carrying any religious advantage, or as even fitted to awaken enthusiastic or passionate emotions in those who visit them. With a feeling of something like impatience the great apostle to the Gentiles puts away from him as a weak and too earthly sentiment the yearning of those who have known Christ after the flesh, and although he had known Christ after the flesh he is determined that henceforth he would know Him so no more. His conception of the Divine Master was too exalted and spiritual, and the gospel which he preached too world-wide in its destination, to be made dependent on particular times or places. Men in all places are alike near to Him in whom they live, move, and have their being. Origen visited Palestine more than once, and in the later period of his life continued for a considerable time to reside at Cæsarea. But "from the writings of Origen we should not infer that either he himself had visited, or that it was the custom of his day to visit, the holy places for the purpose of stimulating devotion, or under the notion that prayer in them was more acceptable to God than when made elsewhere."

Neither Christ nor His apostles attach special sanctity or efficacy to particular shrines.

The view of the apostle Paul.

The idea that prayer in certain holy places more acceptable to God than elsewhere unknown to Origen.

But by the time of Constantine at the opening of the fourth century a vast change in this respect has passed over



Heathen gods and goddesses conceived as local deities, and so their worship localised.

The worshippers of such divinities in becoming Christians carried this tendency with them.

Probably the first great impulse to this usage due to Helena, the Empress-mother.

Before long the churches built by Constantine and Helena in Palestine became as the shrines of Apollo or Diana. And the alleged discovery of the true

Christian thought and feeling. How was it brought about? The tendency to *localise* incidents in the history or imaginary history of gods or heroes is one of the most invariable characteristics of all heathen religions. Not only the Egyptian Isis and the Persian sun-god Mithras, but the gods and goddesses of the Greek and Roman mythologies, were, as a rule, conceived as local deities, whose birth-places, or the scenes associated with their traditional achievements, became *shrines* or sacred places, each with its own consecrating legends, many of them drawing towards them at stated times and recurring festivals large numbers of pilgrims. It is not wonderful that the worshippers of such heathen divinities, on professing faith in Christ, carried with them into the Church many of their feelings and usages, and among others *this*, of associating the object of their new worship in a special manner with the places where He had lived and died on earth.

It is true that Eusebius in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*,<sup>1</sup> written before Constantine himself came to the East, speaks of Christian pilgrims coming from various parts of the world to pray at the cave on the Mount of Olives, near which the Ascension had taken place. But probably the first great impulse to visit Palestine was due to Helena, the mother of Constantine, who in the year 326, when she was almost eighty years old, paid a visit to Jerusalem, and after having, as Eusebius informs us, "rendered due reverence to the ground which the Saviour's feet had trodden," she built two churches, one over the cave at Bethlehem, the place of His nativity, the other on the Mount of Olives in memory of His Ascension, described by Eusebius as "two noble and beautiful monuments of devotion"; while a little later the Emperor himself had built a "magnificent church" on the supposed site of the Sepulchre, and two other oratories, one on Calvary, and the other where the Lord's body was said to have been embalmed. Before long the splendid sanctuaries erected by Constantine and his mother became for Christians what the shrines of Delphi or Daphne were to the worshippers of Apollo or Diana, or the Kaaba at Mecca to the Arab tribes, or the tomb of the prophet at Medina to the followers of Islam.

Especially when about 347 the report went far and wide that the cross on which Jesus died had been discovered there by the Empress-mother, and that the most extra-

<sup>1</sup> VI., 18.

ordinary virtue resided in it, the marvellous story, attested by Cyril, drew many pilgrims to Jerusalem from all parts of Europe.

Here again, as in so many other instances, while the Church won a great victory over paganism, paganism avenged itself by inoculating the Church with its own materialising *virus*. Men and women recently emerged from heathen cults and their associations, unable to shake off their influence, attribute magical virtue to external rites, and a process begins and proceeds which tends more and more to put the external and material for the spiritual, and the ceremonial for the ethical. The tendency to *localise* religion, to connect peculiar virtues and advantages with pilgrimages to "holy places" was but a part of that still more general tendency to externalise and paganise Christianity.

The great Augustine with his clear insight and spiritual perceptions had already in his time found it necessary to resist this tendency, and to remind his contemporaries that righteousness was not to be sought in the East, nor mercy in the West, and that long journeys and perilous voyages are not needed to carry us to Him who is near to all them that call upon Him; but even Jerome, who well knew that prayers in Palestine are not more acceptable or efficacious than prayers in Europe, was yet led by the prevailing spirit of the time to take up his abode at Bethlehem, and his example had a great effect on others. Especially when men began to be assured, as they were assured, that long and perilous journeys to the "Holy Land" would secure for them remission of sins and entrance into heaven, such journeys became inevitable. So it was that the cave at Bethlehem and the sepulchre at Jerusalem became for those half-pagan Christians what the sacred stone at Mecca was to Arabian devotees; so it was that from every European country pilgrims in great numbers soon began to make their way to Palestine. If they died there, their lot was envied rather than bewailed; if they returned, it was to be honoured and venerated as those whose sins were pardoned, who, no matter what befell them, were sure of heaven: and especially if they came laden with fragments of the true cross, and with their wallets full of relics, even their earthly fortune was secure.

Not a few of the pilgrims took up their permanent abode at Jerusalem, which now grew rapidly in population and in prosperity, though before long it became as notorious for

cross and other relics and their virtue brought other pilgrims in great numbers. So paganism avenged itself by inoculating the Church with its own *virus*.

Augustine resisted this tendency,

but Jerome by his example encouraged it,

as did the promises and hopes held out to the pilgrims.

Jerusalem grew in population and prosperity, but

soon in  
profligacy  
also.

So Gregory  
of Nyssa  
dissuades  
his friends  
from visit-  
ing it;

and even  
Jerome  
strikes the  
same note.

At the close  
of the first  
millennium,  
believed to  
be the end  
of the  
world, the  
pilgrims  
increased,

and were  
robbed and  
oppressed  
by the  
Seljuk  
Turks, who  
had taken  
Palestine.

The tales of  
outrage  
gave rise  
to the  
crusades:  
story of their  
startling.

profligacy, vice, and crime as it had been famed for piety. Towards the end of the fourth century the city was visited by Gregory of Nyssa, who in a letter to a friend denies that it is a Christian's duty "to visit the places in Jerusalem in which the symbols of our Lord's sojourn in the flesh are to be seen," and seeks to dissuade his friend from visiting it for religious reasons. "Why is there such zeal about what neither makes a man blessed, nor fit for the kingdom?" he asks. "When the thing is thoroughly looked into, it is found even to inflict injury on the souls of those who have entered on a strict course of life; it is not worthy of that great zeal, but is rather to be greatly shunned." He points out the perils to the morals of all who go there. "What will one gain by being in those places? . . . There is no species of iniquity that is not dared therein—flagitious actions and adulteries and thefts, idolatries and witchcrafts, and envyings, and murders; and this last evil, above others, is common in that place." Jerome, as we have seen, speaks to the same effect. Writing to Paulinus about 393, he says: "Not the having been at Jerusalem, but having lived well there, is to be praised. The court of heaven is equally open from Jerusalem and from Britain. The Kingdom of God is within you." The pilgrims still continued to repair thither, however, on a large scale.

In the seventh century the Mahomedans took possession of Jerusalem and of all Palestine. At first they did not interfere seriously with the devotion of the pilgrims, but on the contrary found it very profitable to encourage it. But as the close of the first millennium approached a belief prevailed widely among Christians that the end of the world and the day of judgment were at hand. As that year drew near the pilgrims to the Holy Land became more numerous than ever. Men of all ranks and classes left their homes and journeyed to the East to worship at the tomb of the Redeemer. It was just then that the Seljuk Turks, a fierce and savage race, who had originally migrated from the far East, and adopted the Mahomedan faith, but who are to be carefully distinguished from the Arabian followers of Mahomed, took possession of Jerusalem and Palestine, and immediately began to rob and oppress, insult and outrage the Christian pilgrims from the West.

The few who survived to return to their Western homes told harrowing tales of the cruel outrages and wrongs now inflicted on the pilgrims. All over Christendom the hearts of men thrilled with indignation and terror, and needed

only a spark to kindle them into flame. Legend credits Peter of Amiens in Picardy, known as Peter the Hermit, with having supplied that spark, and with having fanned it into the white heat of fervour which moved men to the great enterprise of rescuing the Holy Land from the clutch of the infidel. It is now generally recognised that it was at a great Council assembled at Clermont in Auvergne in France that the main and perhaps primary impulse was given to the first of the great crusades in which Western Christendom now embarked for the recovery of the cradle of their religion; and given by the Pope himself, Pope Urban II., in a thrilling address to the vast multitudes assembled at that Council. No doubt the Pope himself had been impelled by the enthusiasm of Peter. It was about the year 1095 that the series of movements began, known as the Crusades, which went on for nearly two centuries, and which may be described as pilgrimages on a large scale, but into whose singular history and results, very different indeed from those which the crusaders anticipated and intended, we cannot now enter. It is not too much to say that they were simply disastrous to the cause of true religion. By the preachers of the crusades salvation was assured to all who became soldiers of the Cross. They went forth absolved from all their sins. The consciousness of this, they were told, would soothe the toil of their journey, and should they die, death would bring them the benefits of a blessed martyrdom. Should they suffer, their sufferings would redeem their souls at the expense of their bodies. For large numbers who had been living evil lives, here was a means of cancelling their guilt without any change of character or disposition. It was a new method of salvation by which the road to Palestine, along which they might indulge their licentious passions, became the way to heaven. The yoke of feudalism had lain heavily on the great mass of the serfs: here was a means of emancipation. The opportunity of adventure attracted many; the chance of acquiring great wealth, others. The red cross upon his shoulder freed the peasant from his lord, opened the prison-doors for criminals, and placed debtors beyond the power of their creditors. "Thieves and murderers," says Fuller, "took upon them the Cross to escape the gallows. A lamentable case, that the devil's blackguards should be God's soldiers."

But although Palestine was the chief goal of the pilgrims it was far, even in early times, from being the only one.

These pilgrimages on a large scale began in 1095, and lasted nearly two centuries,

with results disastrous to religion.

Other holy places besides those in

Palestine  
visited by  
pilgrims.

The re-  
puted tombs  
of Peter and  
Paul at  
Rome.

The shrine  
of St.  
Martin at  
Tours.

The prac-  
tice abused.

When the  
crusades to  
Palestine  
ceased the  
number of  
"holy"  
places  
elsewhere  
increased.

Loretto in  
Italy;

Assisi also;

Canterbury  
in England,  
and Paray-  
le-Monial,  
and Lourdes  
in France.

There were others which had acquired great renown as "holy places," to visit which would bring spiritual advantage. There were the reputed tombs of Peter and Paul at Rome, and the catacombs there, the burying places of many martyrs. The shrine of St. Martin at Tours was alleged to have been the scene of innumerable miracles, and was a favourite resort of pilgrims throughout the mediæval period. It soon became customary to send penitents to the shrines of saints by way of penance, and to obtain the benefit of their intercessions. "Frequenting the thresholds of the saints, they would ask for aid against their own sins, and persevering in fastings and prayers or in almsgiving would strive rather to punish than to nourish or add to those sins."<sup>1</sup> But the practice led to great and serious abuses. In a Canon of the Council of Chalons-sur-Saône (A.D. 813) we are told: "A great mistake is made by some who unadvisedly travel to Rome or Tours (to the shrine of St. Martin), and some other places under pretext of prayer. There are presbyters and deacons and others of the clergy, who, living carelessly, think that they are purged from their sins, and entitled to discharge their ministry if they reach such places. There are also laymen who think that they sin or have sinned with impunity because they frequent such places."

The cessation of the Crusades to Palestine led to a large increase in the number of "holy places," where the people were encouraged to believe that spiritual benefit would be found. In Italy there was Loretto, which was (and still is) reputed to have the house in which the Virgin Mary lived in Nazareth, which was believed to have been miraculously translated from Palestine to Dalmatia in 1291, and to have been removed to its present site in 1295, and which contains what purports to be an image of the virgin, which tradition ascribes to the evangelist Luke. Loretto is still visited by 50,000 pilgrims annually. And in the same country there was Assisi also, the birthplace of St. Francis, where, too, he founded the mendicant order that bears his name. As we are reminded by the *Canterbury Tales*, Canterbury was a favourite place of pilgrimage in England, as Paray-le-Monial and Lourdes are still in France. Chaucer suggests, perhaps to some extent caricatures, the abuses which grew out of these pilgrimages.

<sup>1</sup> "Homilies" of Cæsarius of Arles, III., p. 23.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE WORSHIP OF RELICS

THE Christians of the early centuries had a reverent regard for the dead bodies of their brethren, predisposed to this no doubt both by their natural affection and their faith in the resurrection. This was specially so, as the *Acta Martyrum* of the first three centuries testify, in the case of the mortal remains of those who had been martyrs for the faith. The epistle of the Church of Smyrna with respect to the martyrdom of Polycarp not only tells of the spot where his ashes were tenderly deposited, but adds that "there also, as far as we can, the Lord will grant us to assemble, and to celebrate the natal day of his martyrdom in joy and gladness, both in commemoration of those who have finished their contest before, and to exercise and prepare those that shall be hereafter," the most suggestive and noteworthy thing here being the reference to the day of his martyrdom as his *natal* day, the day of his birth into a higher state of existence. In his *Life of Cyprian* Pontian relates how the Christians, after the martyrdom of Cyprian, stole the martyr's dead body by night and carried it away in triumph, no doubt to treat it similarly. There is no trace as yet of anything in the nature of worship of the remains, or of faith in a miraculous power residing in them.

But when we come to the end of the fourth and the opening years of the fifth century we find these features already evolving. Referring to a martyr who suffered at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Basil (330—379) states that the earth where his remains were buried sent forth a spring of water, "both a safeguard to those in health, a source of pleasure to those who enjoy it soberly, and a comfort to the sick."<sup>1</sup> He also mentions that the ashes of the forty martyrs of Sebaste in Armenia, "being thrown into a river, carried a blessing to all the neighbouring coasts." Ambrose (340—397) relates how a blind man's sight was restored by his touching the bodies of the martyrs Gervasius and Protasius. Of certain other martyrs Chrysostom (347—

Reverent regard for the dead bodies of their friends, especially martyrs, by the early Christians.

Not till end of fourth and opening of fifth century do we find their remains worshipped, and miraculous virtue ascribed to them.

Basil's testimony ; Ambrose's ;

Chrysostom's.

<sup>1</sup> "Hom. in Mart."

407) says: "Let us fall down before their remains; let us embrace their coffins; for the coffins of the martyrs acquire great virtue."<sup>1</sup> He affirms again that the bones of the martyrs drive away death and put it to flight: "Where the bones of the martyrs are buried the devils fly as from fire and intolerable punishment."<sup>2</sup> These and other Fathers, such as Theodoret, attribute to prayers offered in presence of the relics a special virtue in warding off sickness and other ills, as well as in dispelling evil spirits.

Theodoret and others speak similarly.

Hence the erection of altars over the graves of martyrs. No church could be built without such relics.

Even the bones or ashes of Old Testament saints objects of veneration.

The abuse of the traffic became so great that the Emperor had to pass a prohibitory law against it. Specimens of the relics collected.

It was a natural consequence that altars began to be erected over the graves of martyrs, or that relics were secured for them; and soon no church could be built without such relics. The Trullan Council actually passed a decree requiring the demolition of all altars in which no relics had been deposited. After the alleged discovery of the true cross of Christ by Helena no relics were so highly valued as those purporting to be fragments of it, which were very widely distributed; but other relics continued to be in great demand, and the bones or ashes even of Old Testament saints became objects of veneration. Jerome's lady friends, Paula and Eustochium, writing to Marcella, suggest that when she visits the Holy Land, they "will adore the ashes of John the Baptist, Elisha also, and Obadiah"<sup>3</sup>; and Jerome states that Arcadius translated "the bones of the blessed Samuel from Judea to Thrace."<sup>4</sup> About this time indeed the traffic in relics became so great, and the abuses in connection with the trade so serious, that in 386 the Emperor Theodosius found it necessary to interfere by a prohibitory law. On the traffic went, nevertheless; and we hear of even Charlemagne assisting in it. Among the relics collected by his aid were, it is said, the blood, hairs, and clothing of John the Baptist, bones of his father Zacharias, and memorials of the aged Simeon. Hairs from the beard of Noah were exhibited at Corbie about the same time. Innumerable relics connected with our Lord, such as fragments of the cross, the holy spear, the reed, the sponge, the crown of thorns, the seamless coat, the table and bread of the Last Supper, were supplied and greedily accepted by the credulity of the time. One of the most famous of these is the seamless or "Holy Coat" of Treves, which late tradition represented as having been brought to Treves in Rhenish Prussia by the Empress-mother Helena. The earliest

<sup>1</sup> "De Bernice," 7.

<sup>3</sup> Epist. Hieron., xlvii., 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Laud. S. Drosidis."

<sup>4</sup> "c. Vigilant," 5.

reference to it is by a nameless monk in 1106. So recently as 1891 it was visited by almost two million pilgrims. But twenty-one "Holy Coats" have been exhibited in as many different places! Of course many relics of the Virgin Mary have been forthcoming; portions of the remains of Peter and Paul from Rome, including nails from the cross on which Peter suffered, and hairs from his head; relics also of Andrew and Luke and Stephen and Timothy; and extraordinary miracles are said to have been wrought by them. Every sort of disease and fever, not excepting toothache, has been cured by them. There is also the gridiron of St. Lawrence, the straw on which St. Germanus had lain, and a thread from the shirt of St. Lubin.

The worship of relics and the superstitious faith in their virtue were not allowed to establish themselves in the Church without protest. In a treatise no longer extant Vigilantius attacked them, and the superstition connected with them, vigorously; and Jerome endeavoured to refute his arguments. Both Augustine and Gregory the Great refer to the frauds practised in the prosecution of the trade in them. We hear of monks being detected in the act of exhuming bones, which they confessed that they intended to palm off as genuine relics of saints. But the credulity of the age was simply boundless. It was even considered a virtuous and praiseworthy proceeding to steal relics. Bishops and priests are described with admiration as carrying them off from shrines surreptitiously. The *Tripartite Life* represents St. Patrick as going to Rome after he had laid the foundations of Armagh, and as carrying off from thence by what the Life calls "a pious fraud or theft, whilst the keepers of the sacred places were asleep or unconscious," a large quantity of relics of apostles and martyrs—"three hundred and three-score and five relics, together with the relics of Peter and Paul and Lawrence and Stephen, and many others; and a sheet (or towel) was among them stained with Christ's blood, and some of the hair of the Virgin." "O wondrous deed!" exclaims the author of the Life; "O rare theft of a vast treasure of holy things, committed without sacrilege, the plunder of the most holy place in the world!" in rapt admiration of this clever breach of the eighth commandment by the holy apostle of Ireland.

The worship of relics met with opposition from Vigilantius.

Gross frauds characterised the trade in them.

To steal relics counted a virtue.

As we have seen, relics became necessary to the consecration of a church, and so exceedingly valuable an endowment that Councils ordered them to be placed in every

Relics become a valuable Church endowment.



church, and threatened to depose bishops who should consecrate churches without them. We cannot recall in this connection that the Elector of Saxony, Frederick (Luther's Elector and patron), had been a great collector of relics, which to the number of 1,010 he had stored in the Church of All Saints (the Castle-Church) at Wittenberg. He mere look at which secured indulgence for a hundred years. In a catalogue of relics in two churches at Halle of the year 1520 (it was in 1517 that Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle-Church just mentioned) included a piece of earth from a field at Damascus of which God had made the first man; a piece from a field at Hebron where Adam repented; a portion of the body of Isaac; twenty-five fragments from the burning bush at Horeb; specimens of manna from the wilderness; drops of the Virgin's milk; the finger of the Baptist which pointed to the Lamb of God; the finger of Thomas which touched the wounds of Jesus; a bit of the altar from which John read Mass for the Virgin; the stone that acted and killed Stephen; a piece of Paul's skull. The collection included 8,933 articles, which could supply indulgence for 39,245 persons for one hundred years and 220 days. The contributions that secured indulgence went into the pocket of Albert of Mainz, the Elector Archbishop.

How this  
faith in  
relics is  
explained.

How was this extraordinary state of things, this amazing faith in the talismanic effect of relics, and this worship of them, brought about? How did it find its way into the Church? That reverent regard for the mortal remains of their dead so characteristic of the early Christians was natural and instinctive, is very far indeed from explaining it. To get at the real origin and genesis of it we must go farther back. It has been pointed out in another connection how the nature and mystery religions, which spread so widely in the early Christian centuries, grew out of the belief that a divine life pervaded the whole world and nature. Hence the deification of the forms and forces of nature, and of the external world, which we have in the nature-religions, and in the ancient mythologies. There is no fact better certified than that the pagan religions of Greek and Roman as well as other heathen cults, as a result of their belief in the deification of matter, paid special veneration to the relics of their dead, believed that they had of divine, miraculous virtue resided in them, and that the writer of the article on "Relics" in the *Dictionnaire des Christian Antiquities* states) "the semi-converts of

The deification of the forms and forces of nature a characteristic of the nature-religions. Hence the faith that the relics of the dead had a divine virtue residing in them.

fourth century and downwards brought with them [into the Christian Church] a strong tendency to the worship of human relics, and to a belief in their tutelary power." After the conversion of Constantine and the aggrandisement of the Church by its being constituted the State-Church of the Empire, there was an immense influx of heathen into the Church, who were little more than nominal Christians, and who brought over with them the habits of thought and feeling in which they had been brought up, with strong cravings for some equivalent of the sensuous elements in their old heathen cults, and in particular with belief in a divine life pervading the material world, which in a variety of forms now reappears in the Christian Church. As has been already pointed out in another connection, we see it in the divine, regenerating virtue ascribed to the baptismal water, after it has been blessed by the priest; we see it in the similar effects attributed to oil, after the benediction has been pronounced on it; we see it in the virtue which the mere making of the sign of the cross—"crossing oneself"—is supposed to exercise; we see it in the virtue ascribed to the relics of dead saints; we see it in the *deification* (for that is what it amounts to) of the bread in the Lord's Supper. It is just another case of the deification of matter, characteristic of pagan cults. And this suggests how the great doctrine of the Incarnation itself was drawn (as has been also shown already) into the current of this sensuous, materialising reaction. Gregory of Nyssa points out that when Christ assumed a human form He deified the flesh, and everything related to it; and He imparts Himself to every Christian who partakes of that flesh or body in the Eucharist. As Cyril of Jerusalem puts it, even though the body of the saint is dead, and the soul no longer present in it, it still retains a sort of divine, miraculous virtue through its having once partaken of Christ, that is to say, God Himself, in the Eucharist. Hence the special, wonder-working virtue that belongs to the bones, and even to the clothes, and other belongings of the dead saints. It is simply a reproduction within the sphere of the Church of the pagan idea of the deification of matter. External contact with the relic—be it a bone or a rag torn from a garment—acts without any effort or consciousness of the person benefited except the mere external contact with it. It is the recrudescence in the so-called Christian Church of the magico-theurgical element which is found in so many heathen religions.

The heathen converts to Christianity brought the belief with them.

How the doctrine of the Incarnation was drawn into this superstition.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE EVOLUTION OF IMAGE WORSHIP AND SAINT WORSHIP

Deep anti-  
pathy to  
image  
worship in  
early  
Church.

Derived  
in part  
from  
Jewish  
teaching ;

but also  
from that of  
Christ and  
His  
apostles.

THE early Church had a strong antipathy to image worship. From the time of the Maccabees the second commandment—"Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them nor serve them," etc.<sup>1</sup>—was interpreted by the Jews as forbidding not only the worship of the likeness of any living thing, but even the making of such a likeness. Origen affirms that there was no maker of images among the Jews, that neither painter nor sculptor was in their State.<sup>2</sup> The first Christians—both those who had been Jews and those who had been Gentiles—either inherited or came to cherish this feeling. And Christ's own teaching on the subject was clear and unequivocal. His great word, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth,"<sup>3</sup> could not but make a profound impression on His followers. Accordingly, we have the apostle Paul declaring to the men of Athens "as he beheld their city full of idols" that "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped by men's hands"; that "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device," etc.<sup>4</sup> It was felt that in itself the use of images narrowed, materialised, and degraded the idea of God, and that, as our Lord Himself suggested, His own bodily presence had to be withdrawn in order to a truer, larger, more exalted, and spiritual conception of Him.<sup>5</sup> This, too, was the teaching of His greatest apostle. "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more."<sup>6</sup> The twelve had known Him "after the flesh," but even for them it was expedient that He should go away, withdraw His bodily presence, and send the Spirit in His stead to the end that they might cease to know Him "after the flesh," which

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xx. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "c. Cels.," iv., § 31.

<sup>3</sup> John iv. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xvii. 24, 29.

<sup>5</sup> John xvi. 7.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor. v. 16.

tended to materialise and debase their idea of Him, and that they might come to know Him in His higher, more spiritual, and diviner aspects and relations.

The strong hostility to the use of images in divine worship thus created was much deepened and intensified in the early Christian centuries by that close association of images with idolatry and with the corruptions and impurities of heathenism with which the Christians came in contact, which many of them had known too well in their own experience as heathen. It was not, therefore, till the pure and elevated sentiment of the early Christians, with its high-toned spirituality, became tainted and debased by habitual contact with and subjection to pagan influences, that image-worship became possible in the Church.

This hostility deepened by the association of images with idolatry.

Meantime, it ought to be noted that several early Christian writers of influence endorsed the Jewish interpretation of the second commandment, and understood it as condemning art of all sorts. Clement of Alexandria says: "It has been manifestly forbidden us to practise deceptive art; for, saith the prophet, Thou shalt not make the likeness that is in heaven or in the earth below."<sup>1</sup> Clement holds that art cannot be separated from idolatry; and his opposition to it was inspired from two quarters; first, from the teaching of the Old Testament prophets which (as in such a passage as Isa. xlv. 16, "They shall go into confusion together that are makers of idols,") was regarded as hostile to the plastic arts as being bound up with idolatry; but, secondly, he was deeply influenced by Plato and the Greek philosophers who taught that the use of images and idols keeps the mind fixed on the visible and material, and prevents it from ascending to the contemplation of what is spiritual and abiding. There is no doubt that the teaching of Clement and other Alexandrines had a deep and enduring influence, and was still alive and persistent in the great Iconoclastic controversy.

Certain Christian writers endorsed the Jewish interpretation of the second commandment, as Clement of Alexandria;

Tertullian in like manner argues that if God forbade the likeness of anything, "how much more His own image."<sup>2</sup> He thought painting a sin in Hermogenes,<sup>3</sup> and affirms that "the law of God in order to eradicate idolatry proclaims 'Thou shalt not make an idol,' adding also 'nor the likeness of anything' . . . Over the whole world hath it forbidden such arts to the servants of God."<sup>4</sup> Artistic gifts were bestowed on man by the dæmons in order to

<sup>1</sup> "Protrept.," c. iv., § 62.

<sup>3</sup> "Adv. Herm.," c. i.

<sup>2</sup> "De Spect.," c. 23.

<sup>4</sup> "De Idololatr.," c. iv.

Yet in the West from early times art was employed as a handmaid to religion.

Witness the pictures in the catacombs.

And the subjects delineated.

The symbol of the fish.

entice him away from the true God.<sup>1</sup> Yet in spite of Tertullian the Church in the West took a different line. From the days of the catacombs art was freely employed as the handmaid of religion. In the statements of many historians alleging a deep and universal hostility to art of every sort on the part of the early Christians there is, therefore, much exaggeration, and indeed positive error.

The number and variety of pictures in the catacombs, dating from the second century onwards, and the significant symbols and historical and allegorical figures employed and prized by the Christians in their private and social life from very early times, afford conclusive evidence that they were not averse, as they are often represented to have been, to the pictorial art in itself; and the pictures in the catacombs are by no means restricted to Biblical or Christian subjects. The figure of Orpheus with his lyre, for example, is found in the roof ornamentation of the catacomb of Domitilla, and that is far from being a solitary case of the kind. The decorations in the catacombs of St. Callixtus at Rome, and of St. Januarius at Naples, are said to be still more classical in treatment. Mommsen says that the decorations of the most ancient part of the cemetery of Flavia Domitilla would not do discredit to a painter of the best age.<sup>2</sup> And their Christian origin is unquestionable.

The favourite and most common subjects of delineation were such as these: persons, objects, or incidents from Old Testament history, such as Adam and Eve, the Ark, the offering of Isaac in sacrifice, the passing through the Red Sea, Moses smiting the rock, Daniel in the lions' den; scenes from the Gospels, such as the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, the changing the water into wine at Cana, the feeding of the five thousand, the raising of Lazarus from the dead; pictures from the parables, such as the good shepherd, the vine and its branches, the marriage-feast, the ten virgins. The symbols most in favour were the dove with the olive branch, an emblem of peace; the palm branch, a sign of victory; the anchor, a symbol of hope; the hart panting for the water-brooks; a ship in full sail representing the Church; and the vine with its branches suggesting union with Christ. A favourite symbol of Christ was the fish. An acrostic composed of the initial letters of the title of our Lord in Greek (Ιησους Χριστος Θεου Υιος Σωτηρ) make up the word ΙΧΘΥΣ, which means "fish."

<sup>1</sup> "De Spectaculis," 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Contemporary Review*, May, 1871, p. 170.

The references to the symbol of the "fish" thus formed are frequent in early literature. It occurs in the *Christian Sibylline Books*.<sup>1</sup> Tertullian associates the "fish" with the baptismal water, and it is found in the Roman catacombs, and on rings, lamps, vases, and the like. Even Clement of Alexandria is not opposed to the use of symbols, but exhorts Christians to be restricted and careful in the use of personal ornaments with symbolic pictures on them. Referring to the finger-ring, used as a marriage or signet ring for sealing purposes, he says: "Let our seals be either a dove, or a fish, or a ship scudding before the wind, or a musical lyre, or a ship's anchor . . . or if there be one fishing, he will remember the apostle (Peter), and the children drawn out of the water."<sup>2</sup>

But all along, and so late as the opening of the fourth century, even pictorial representations of Scripture scenes were scrupulously and expressly excluded from the churches. In the course of the fourth century, however, pictorial delineations of Scriptural personages and incidents were beginning to be transferred from the cemeteries and the recesses of private life to the places of worship. It was for the purpose of prohibiting an intrusion of such pictures into the churches, which had evidently already begun, that the Council of Elvira, held about the year 305, passed this Canon (its 36th): "It was resolved that there ought to be no pictures in the church lest what is worshipped and adored should be depicted on the walls."<sup>3</sup> The danger was that representations of the objects of worship and adoration should appear upon the walls and become themselves the objects of worship.

Till opening of fourth century pictures excluded from the churches.

Now if even such pictures of Scripture scenes as have been described above were forbidden to appear on the church walls, the use of images of the Divine Persons was still more rigidly prohibited. The evidence to that effect is abundant. Thus in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, an apology in the form of a dialogue between a heathen and a Christian, written probably in the early part of the third century, the heathen interlocutor, Cæcilius, objects to the religion of the Christians because it has no temples, no altars, and no images (simulacra). Octavius, the Christian, in reply, explains why these are absent, and the heathen friend, Cæcilius, having heard his reasons, admits the

Images of the Divine Persons rigidly excluded.

<sup>1</sup> I., 217.

<sup>2</sup> "Pæd.," iii., II.

<sup>3</sup> "Placuit picturas in ecclesia non esse debere ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur."

Eusebius  
indignantly  
excludes  
them ;

and  
Epiphanius ;

and Atha-  
nasius and  
others.

What fur-  
thered the  
evolution of  
image  
worship.

justice of the exclusion. Prior to the time of Constantine there is no trace of an image of Christ, in the proper sense of the word, except among the Carpocratians, a Gnostic sect, and in the case of the heathen Emperor, Alexander Severus (222—235 A.D.), who had in his private chapel images of Abraham, Orpheus, Apollonius, and Christ. When Constantia Augusta, sister of the Emperor Constantine, and wife of Licinius, applied to Eusebius for the image of Christ, he refers her to the Biblical prohibition of image-worship, asks whether she had ever seen such a thing in a church or heard of it, rebukes her sharply, and denounces the use of images of Christ (who has laid aside his earthly form, and whose heavenly glory transcends the conception and artistic skill of man) as tending to idolatry. Certain images of two men, alleged to be of Paul and Christ Himself, he says, he took into his own possession, to the end that "we may not come into repute as carrying our God about with us in an image, like the idolaters."<sup>1</sup> Epiphanius, who became Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus in 367, relates that in a church in a certain village in Palestine, he tore up a curtain bearing a picture of Christ, or some other sacred person, having in mind the Scriptural prohibition of images, with the injunction to those concerned to wrap therewith some beggar's corpse. Athanasius, again, protests against the worship of the flesh or of images as a heathen degradation.<sup>2</sup> Asterius, Bishop of Amasa in Pontus, earnestly denounces even the custom of people of high station wearing clothes embroidered with pictures taken from the gospel history, and exhorts them rather to have Christ in their hearts.

But the Church had already become inoculated with the materialising spirit of paganism, and a process of change had already set in which soon culminated in actual and deliberate worship. After the conversion of Constantine to the Christian faith, and the establishment of Christianity as the State Church of the Empire, there was an immense accession to the Christian ranks in the number of heathen now professing Christianity, who brought over with them into the Church the habits of thought and feeling in which they had been brought up, with strong cravings for some equivalent of the sensuous elements and external rites in the heathen cults which they had left, and a marked abatement in the antipathy to such elements that had characterised the

<sup>1</sup> Migne "Opera," ii., col. 1545.

<sup>2</sup> "De Incarn.," cc. 11—18; "Ep. ad Epictetum"; "Or.," iii.; "c. Ar.," 25, 16.

early age when the Church was under persecution—an *ecclesia pressa*. In this way Christianity became deeply paganised. Fragments of the true cross began to be prized as beyond price. Not only martyrs and saints, but their images, their bones, and wearing apparel, relics of all kinds connected with them, had a peculiar miracle-working virtue ascribed to them—the magico-theurgical element present in all heathen religions. Divines like Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Jerusalem were required to put forth the most desperate efforts to justify or excuse the heathen leaven that now found its way into the Church. But the astonishing ingenuity and subtlety of the Greek intellect were equal to the demand now made upon it. According to Gregory of Nyssa, when Christ assumed a body He deified the flesh and everything related to it, and disseminates Himself in every believer who partakes of that flesh or body in the Eucharist<sup>1</sup>; nay, as Cyril of Jerusalem puts it, even though the soul is not present, a miraculous virtue thus obtained continues to reside in the dead bodies of the saints.<sup>2</sup> It is really an extension and application of the heathen idea of the deification of matter. Hence the special miraculous virtue that belonged to the bones and other relics of the saints. Hence churches had not received their highest consecration and sanctity unless built over the graves of saints, or at least in possession of the bones of one. In fact a law was at length passed that a church could not be consecrated without the possession of a relic, whose miraculous virtue, derived from the body of some saint, gave sanctity as well as a valuable healing asset to the edifice; just as a cat or a crocodile in the shrine of an Egyptian temple gave it a peculiar sanctity.

The skill of Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Jerusalem taxed to justify them.

But the first direct actual step towards image worship was the transference of pictures of the martyrs and of representations of Biblical scenes and stories to the walls of churches—a transference effected on the plausible plea that they would be the means of instructing and edifying the rude and unlettered populace through their eyes. Their rude and ignorant minds, it was pleaded, would be arrested and enchained by such pictures, with the inscriptions explaining them, and would be led to further inquiry. Paulinus of Nola (353—431), a man of noble Roman family, of consular rank, of great wealth, and literary culture and charm, renounced the world, became devoted to an ascetic life, and built numerous churches, which, on the

The first step was placing pictures of martyrs and Biblical scenes on the walls of churches.

<sup>1</sup> "Cat. Mag.," xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> "Cat.," xvii., 16.



plea just referred to, he had adorned with counterfeit presentments of martyrs and Biblical subjects, among which our Lord appears in the symbol of a lamb. He hoped by this means to attract and interest and instruct the untrained and ignorant rustics who visited the churches. Soon images of saints of special sanctity became objects of superstitious regard. In Rome, statuettes of Symeon the Stylite, who was still living and standing day and night on his lofty pillar near Antioch, were offered for sale, and in great demand as a means of talismanic defence against evil influence.

The earliest known image of Christ set up for worship.

There was still, however, a deep and strong feeling against setting up an image of our Lord Himself in the church. The earliest known image of Him actually set up for adoration appears to have been the bust of Christ on the triumphal arch of S. Paolo fuori le Mura (completed about 440).

The turning point in the evolution was the Nestorian controversy. Cyril denounced as the originator of iconolatry.

The chief and most decisive turning point in the evolution of image worship was the time of Cyril of Alexandria (412—444), whom the Nestorians abhorred and denounced as the originator of iconolatry. In the early period of her persecution and humiliation the Church was accustomed to think of Christ chiefly in His humiliation, and to take literally what is said of Him in Isa. lii. 14; liii. 2, 3, as the Suffering Servant of God, as "having no form, nor comeliness," and as even repulsive in bodily appearance, so that she had no special desire for a likeness of Him; but now when the doctrine of the Person of Christ had reached a more advanced stage of development under Cyril, and when the Church had become a great, victorious world-power, He was thought of differently. And in the Greek Church especially, where, as we have seen, the sensuous tendency in worship was particularly strong, pictures of our Lord and of His mother, some of which claimed to be authentic, and some to be of miraculous origin, began to appear and to receive adoration, and were soon greatly multiplied. It was now that image worship began with the bowing of the knee, prostration (*προσκύνησις*) and the burning of incense before the image; and before long the churches and the homes of the people were filled with images of Christ and the saints, made by the monks. It was in the East, as I have said, that image worship first began, and soon prevailed widely; the Church in the West proceeded with more caution, and was for long very hesitating and doubtful in its consent to actual image worship. Augustine laments that among the rude Chris-

Pictures of our Lord and His mother began to appear in the churches.

Image worship spreads rapidly in the East; proceeded more slowly in the West.

tian masses there are many worshippers of images (*multos esse picturarum adultores*) and advises them to seek Christ in the Bible, rather than in images.<sup>1</sup> Serenus, Bishop of Massilia, indignantly shattered and scattered the images he found in a church on account of the adoration he saw paid to them; and the contemporary Roman bishop, Gregory the Great (590—604), while condemning his violent method of procedure, commended the zeal of Serenus, expressing a desire that images in churches should be made to serve only for instructing the minds of the ignorant (*ad instruendas solummodo mentes nescientium*).<sup>2</sup> But about the same time we have Leontius, Bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus, vigorously defending and encouraging prostration (*προσκύνησις*) before the image, affirming that blood had been known to flow from many images; so in spite of all protests against it image worship soon prevailed in the West as well as in the East. Thomas Aquinas declared that an image of Christ claims the same veneration as Christ Himself.<sup>3</sup>

Augustine laments it.

Serenus opposes it.

How Gregory the Great regards it.

Leontius and Aquinas sanction it.

Closely associated with the worship of the image of Christ was the worship of the images of saints. The genesis of the latter is seen in the reverence which from an early time was paid to the martyrs, who were honoured as the heroes of the Church. As we see in the case of Polycarp, it became customary to assemble at the graves of the martyrs for the purpose of holding memorial services in their honour; and somewhat later churches or martyrs' chapels were erected over their graves. To the martyr's death, too, a special merit was in course of time attributed, which not only cancelled his own sin, and enabled him to enter Paradise at once, but had virtue also to atone for the sins of others. It began to be taught even by distinguished Fathers of the Church that the saints in heaven were accessible to the prayers of Christians on earth, and a sort of omnipresence and omniscience, based on their union with Christ, began to be imputed to them. Jerome invests departed saints with a sort of omnipresence (as the heathen attributed ubiquity to their *dæmons*) because, according to Rev. xiv. 4, they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.<sup>4</sup> The three great Cappadocians, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa, along with Chrysostom, Jerome, and Ephraim Syrus in the East, and Ambrose and Augustine in the West, took a leading and

Worship of saints and their images. Its genesis;

and evolution.

The three great Cappadocians with Chrysostom and others promote it.

<sup>1</sup> "De Moribus," i., 75.

<sup>3</sup> "Summa," iii., Q. 25; 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Gieseler, II., p. 144.

<sup>4</sup> "Adv. Vigilant," n. 6.

The distinction between *adoratio* and *invocatio*, *λατρεία* and *δουλεία* illusory.

Dr. Gwatkin's criticism.

Julian with good reason accuses the Christians of reintroducing polytheism.

Pope Boniface IV. consecrates and fills the Pantheon anew.

Vigorously opposed by Vigilantius.

The cult reached its climax in eighth century.

influential part in "opening the floodgates" for the invocation of saints by their teaching and exhortations. They taught distinctly and emphatically that the saints in heaven hear the prayers of men on earth, intercede on their behalf and send them help from above. A theoretical distinction was indeed attempted to be made between *adoratio* and *invocatio*, between *λατρεία* and *δουλεία*, but the distinction was quite illusory for the masses of the people generally, who found in martyr and saint worship some compensation for the lost hero-and-Manes worship of paganism. "There is no trace of any veneration of pictures or images before the fourth century," says Dr. Gwatkin, "and then it first appears as a superstition condemned by the authorities of the Church, as at Elvira in 306. When it became official, the Christian reply [their reply to the heathen reproach that they had no images, and yet were not atheists, because their worship was spiritual] had to be exchanged for futile and irrelevant distinctions between different sorts of worship—futile because nobody ever regarded them in practice, and irrelevant because no scholastic definitions can undo the fact that the saints are worshipped in the same way and under the same beliefs as the gods had been."<sup>1</sup> With good reason, the Emperor Julian accuses the Christian teachers of reintroducing polytheism, only, he sarcastically remarks, one revolts from the worship of dead martyrs and saints and their relics as from "the stench of graves and dead men's bones." Deeply significant it is that Pope Boniface IV., who received the Pantheon at Rome as a gift from the Emperor at the opening of the seventh century, converted it into a church of the Blessed Virgin and All Martyrs, and founded a *festum omnium sanctorum*, so that what was by the virtual deification of the saints a new Pantheon was inaugurated and established in the Church. What the tutelary deities were in the old heathenism—Eusebius suggests the parallel—the saints and martyrs became in the new. Thus a new heathenism takes the place of the old, as a new mythology, quite as fictitious and imaginative as the former, takes the place of the old mythology; not without vigorous protest, however. Vigilantius in Aquitaine brands the adorers of martyrs and relics as "invokers of ashes and idolaters," and speaks of heathen customs as having penetrated under the name of Divine worship into the shrines of Christianity. When the eighth century

<sup>1</sup> "Early Church History," Vol. I., Chap. XI., p. 188.

opened the worship of saints and the worship of images had reached their climax in the superstitions and abuses which had become attached to them. We hear of the paint being scraped off the images to mix it with the Communion wine to give it greater efficacy, and of the bread of the Eucharist being laid on the images because of the virtue it would derive from them. And such was the value attached to the relics of the saints that the traffic in them became a great source of wealth, and a splendid opportunity of fraud and imposture which was used industriously.

Closely connected with saint worship was the practice of Christians in adopting particular saints as their "patrons." A martyr associated with a particular place was recognised as the patron of the Christians of that place. The custom began towards the end of the fourth century. Ambrose, for example, in 386 calls Gervasius and Protasius the patrons of the orthodox Christians at Milan. Paulinus of Nola gives this title to Felix, to whom his church was dedicated, and under whose care and protection he and his people were supposed to be. Augustine speaks of commending the dead to the saints near whom they are buried as patrons. The possession of a relic was considered at first sufficient to make the saint of whom it was a relic the patron of its possessor. Hence relics were designated *patrocinia*, defences, or protections. Theodelinda about the year 600 built a church near Milan in honour of John the Baptist that he might be an intercessor for and protector of her husband and children. She promised yearly gifts to his oratory that they might have his aid in battle, or however they might be situated.

In the meantime Mohammedanism, inspired by an abhorrence of idolatry and image worship, so rife among both Christians and heathen, had arisen and spread far and wide, displacing image-worshipping Christianity in not a few of the countries where the Christian faith had been earliest planted. "Not uninfluenced by the Mohammedan opposition to the Christian idolatry of images" (Moeller), Leo the Isaurian, a man of great ability and energy, who had risen from a humble origin to sit upon the imperial throne at Constantinople, and to raise the Greek Empire from a condition of degradation and weakness to a position of power and influence, now (716—741) set himself with great earnestness and vigour to put down the superstition of image worship. In 726 he prohibited prostration before images; in 730 he issued a command to remove all

Patron  
saints.

The  
Emperor  
Leo the  
Isaurian  
sets on foot  
a crusade  
against  
image  
worship.

movable images from the churches, and to whitewash those on the frescoes which were immovable. Image worship had been very actively promoted by the monks, and the masses of the people generally had become fanatically attached to it ; but popular risings of the devotees of image worship were repressed with a strong hand. Pope Gregory II. strenuously opposed Leo as far as his influence extended, and his successor, Gregory III., excommunicated all iconoclasts, and threatened them with the ban ; whereupon the Emperor Leo deprived the Pope of all his revenues from Southern Italy, severed Illyria from the Papal jurisdiction, and gave it to the patriarch at Constantinople. Leo's son and successor, Constantine V., carried on the crusade against images with hardly less vigour than his father. At a synod held at Constantinople in 754, and meant to be oecumenical, image worship was abolished as creature-worship and idolatry, contrary to Scripture and the teaching of the Fathers ; and the ban was pronounced against all image worshippers, including John of Damascus, the famous dogmatist, who wrote strongly in support of images, but who, living within Saracen rule, was able to defy all attempts of the Emperor to molest him. Within the Greek Empire image worship was now well-nigh exterminated, the most ruthless measures being adopted to extirpate it, large numbers of monks who encouraged it being scourged and imprisoned or banished. It is rather curious that it owes its restoration on two successive occasions to two women. Constantine's successor, Leo IV., maintained the policy of his father, but lacked his father's ability and energy ; but on Leo's death, which took place not without suspicion of foul play, his wife Irene, a warm friend of images, became guardian in behalf of her son in his minority, and embraced the opportunity of restoring image worship. At a new Council held at Nicæa in 787, the decisions of 754 were annulled, and image worship restored in the form of bowing and prostration (*προσκύνησις*) before the image. Some of the later Emperors were hostile to it, but on the death of one of them, Theophilus, his wife Theodora, who now ruled as regent, secured the final triumph of the image worshippers. Thus the popular tendency in the cultus, with its sensuous and idolatrous element, and bringing in its train many gross superstitions and abuses, gained the victory. It was not the first nor the last time that we find the deft hand of woman on the mainsprings of history, even ecclesiastical history, and exercising a decisive, sometimes,

Almost exterminated in the Greek Empire.

Restored by Irene.

Its triumph secured by another Empress—Theodora.

alas !, a sinister influence on its movements. Eve has had many successors in her sex.

Meantime, a determined opposition to images appeared in the West in the great empire ruled over by Charlemagne, an empire far greater and more powerful than the one whose centre was at Constantinople. The Pope sent to Charlemagne the Acts of the Synod of Nicæa (787) restoring image worship. Charlemagne, however, had no idea of being schoolmastered or dictated to by the Pope, whom he regarded as one of his subjects, and whom he more than once freely lectured, although he declined to be lectured by him. The great Emperor of the West strongly resented the action of the Greeks in enacting laws, as they now did, opposed to the Frankish practice, as the laws in favour of image worship were, and published a State paper denouncing every form of image worship as idolatry, although he said he did not approve of some things done by the Iconoclasts. The *Caroline Books*, while opposed to the excesses of the Iconoclasts, affirm that God alone is to be worshipped, and the adoration of images to be rejected, for although the educated may be able to distinguish between the image and the person it portrays, the common man is not able : " Therefore we will have no *adoratio*, no lighting of candles and offering of incense before images, and no kissing of them." A synod at Frankfort in 794 confirmed the positions already affirmed by Charlemagne. In the Frankish Empire, in fact, down to the tenth century, the opposition to image worship continued ; and instead of treating Charlemagne as Gregory II. and Gregory III. did Leo. III.—that is, as an ill-mannered schoolboy—the Pope was too near the great Emperor, and too dependent on him, to do much more than maintain, respecting his action anent images, a discreet silence !

Determined  
opposition  
to image  
worship  
under  
Charle-  
magne.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE EVOLUTION OF MARIOLATRY

ALTHOUGH I have for obvious reasons reserved it for separate treatment, the worship of Mary and her image comes properly along with the worship of the saints and their images. The worship of Mary was, in fact, the consummation and crown of a movement which in all its departments, as we have seen and may have an opportunity of seeing still further, was due primarily and chiefly to the operation of heathen influences. It is necessary to preface our present study by examining with some care the portrait of Mary as it is drawn for us in the Gospels, and by noting also the place she gets in them.

Mary's  
portrait  
and place  
in the  
Gospels.

Now at the very opening of the Gospel narratives we have Elizabeth describing Mary as "blessed among women" and as "the mother of my Lord."<sup>1</sup> She is said by the angel to be "highly favoured,"<sup>2</sup> or as R.V. more exactly renders it in its alternative translation, "endued with grace," not "full of grace," as Rome has it in her version of the *Ave Maria*. She calls herself "the handmaid" (*δούλη* = bondmaid or slave) "of the Lord," and adds that "henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."<sup>3</sup> In Acts i. 14 she is called simply "the mother of Jesus." Nowhere in the New Testament is it hinted that she was "immaculate," and without the common need of salvation: on the contrary we find her saying, "my spirit hath rejoiced in God *my Saviour*."<sup>4</sup> Much less is it anywhere stated or suggested or implied that she was invested with attributes which fitted her to be "queen of heaven," to be the great intercessor with her Son, the object of invocation and worship, with the virtual omniscience and omnipotence necessary to enable her to hear and answer prayer. Contrariwise, on more than one occasion she was pointedly rebuked by Jesus for undue interference with Him in His work. When at the marriage in Cana she somewhat officiously—evidently presuming on her motherhood—in-

Rebuked for  
officious  
interference  
at the  
marriage  
in Cana.

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 42, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Luke i. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Luke i. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Luke i. 47.

formed Him that "they had no wine," He at once repelled and reproved her gratuitous meddling, saying, "Woman [not "mother"] what have I to do with thee?" On which the great exegete, Meyer, remarks: "That Jesus did not say 'mother' flowed involuntarily from the sense of His higher wonder-working position, whence He repelled the interference of feminine weakness, which met Him even in His mother." On another occasion Jesus was told that "his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him." "But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister, and mother."<sup>1</sup> That is to say, He put Mary's blood relationship with Him on a lower level than His spiritual kinship with His disciples who did the will of His Father in heaven. There is not much sign of the apotheosis or deification of Mary here, nor much encouragement to invest her with the high office of special intercessor with Christ in heaven. Later still, "a woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and do it."<sup>2</sup> As Dr. Plummer says on this: "Jesus does not deny the woman's statement," but "she missed the main point. To be the mother of Jesus implies no more than a share in His humanity. To hear and keep the word of God implies communion with what is divine. The relationship with Christ which brings blessedness is the spiritual one." And Alford on Matt. xii. 46—50, says: "All these characteristics of the mother of our Lord are deeply interesting, both in themselves, and as building up, when put together, the most decisive testimony against the fearful superstition which has assigned to her the place of a goddess in the Roman mythology. Great and inconceivable as the honour of that meek and holy woman was, we find her repeatedly the object of rebuke from her Divine Son, and hear Him here declaring that it is one which the humblest believer in Him has in common with her."

At other times Jesus shows that spiritual kinship with Him is a higher thing than blood relationship.

It is very significant that the earliest trace of the aggrandisement and apotheosis of Mary is found in the apocryphal Gospels and the other apocryphal literature. It

Earliest trace of the apotheosis of Mary in the apocryphal books.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 46—50.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xi. 27, 28.



seems to have been from that source—it was certainly not from the New Testament—that certain early Fathers of the Church got the idea of Mary being the counterpart of Eve, as according to Paul Christ was the counterpart of Adam: that through her obedience Mary became the instrumental cause of redemption to the race, as Eve by her disobedience was the fountain of sin and death—that thus Mary became the “mother of all living” in a spiritual sense. This alleged parallel or contrast rather is referred to by Justin Martyr, by Irenæus and Tertullian, and it reappears in later Fathers such as Epiphanius, Jerome, and even Augustine. Yet such Fathers as Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Basil the Great, Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria are far from conceiving Mary as faultless and sinless. They all agree in imputing to her, on the occasions referred to above, maternal vanity, and something worthy of blame.

Yet the Fathers generally do not conceive of her as faultless.

Ascription of perpetual virginity to her due to rise of monastic spirit.

Perpetual virginity contradicted in the Gospels.

The next stage in the apotheosis of Mary was the ascription of perpetual virginity to her. And this appears to have been due to the rise of the monastic spirit and of belief in the superiority of the celibate and virgin life over married and domestic life. And yet the dogma of her perpetual virginity seems to contradict the positive statement of the evangelist, and certain facts on the face of the Gospel narratives. In Matt. i. 25 it is expressly stated that Joseph “knew her not *till* she had brought forth her *first-born* son”; where the words “till” (ἐως) and “first-born,” taken together, seem to imply that she had other children later; and the fact so often mentioned in the Gospels that several persons called “the brethren” or “brothers” of Jesus are always found in the company of Mary is confirmatory of that inference. Dr. Plummer on Luke viii. 19, says: “There is nothing in Scripture to warn us from what is the antecedently natural view that they [the “brethren” of Jesus] are the children of Joseph and Mary. The ‘*first-born*’ in ii. 7 and the *imperfect* followed by ‘till’ in Matt. i. 25, seem to imply that Joseph and Mary *had* children; which is confirmed by contemporary belief<sup>1</sup> and by the constant attendance of the ἀδελφοί on the mother of the Lord.<sup>2</sup> The Epiphanian theory, which gives Joseph children older than Jesus by a former wife, deprives Him of His rights as the heir of Joseph and of the house of David. It seems to be of apocryphal origin<sup>3</sup>; and, like Jerome’s theory of

<sup>1</sup> Mark vi. 3; Matt. xiii. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 32; John ii. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Gospel according to Peter, or Protevangelium of James.

cousinship, to have been invented in the interests of asceticism and *a priori* convictions respecting the perpetual virginity of Mary. Tertullian, in dealing with this passage, seems to assume as a matter of course that the ἀδελφοί are the children of Mary, and that she and they were here censured by Christ.<sup>1</sup> He knows nothing of the doctrine of a sinless virgin."

And to sustain and buttress the dogma of perpetual virginity the most fantastic arguments were adduced. Ambrose, for example, insists that the east gate of the temple in Ezek. xlv. 1, 2, which must remain shut because Jehovah had passed through it, is nothing else but the womb of Mary! "*Quae est haec porta nisi Maria?*"<sup>2</sup> But Gregory the Great improves even on this when he affirms that Christ was born *ex clauso Virginis utero* just as He rose out of the *closed* sepulchre, and through *closed* doors introduced Himself to the view of the apostles." Who could withstand such arguments? Henceforth the perpetual virginity of Mary was accepted as an unquestioned and unquestionable dogma.

The theory buttressed by absurd arguments.

We come now to another step forward in the evolution. We have just seen that Tertullian held that "the brethren" of our Lord were children of Mary, and that he and other Fathers such as Irenæus, Origen, Basil the Great, Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria knew nothing of a sinless virgin. Augustine now prepares the way for this new dogma in the evolution of Mariolatry, although he does not go all the way himself. In his work against Pelagius<sup>3</sup> he excepts Mary "on account of the honour of the Lord" from actual, but not from original sin. He distinctly admits that the flesh of Mary came from a sinful stock,<sup>4</sup> and that in virtue of her descent from Adam she was subject to death as the consequence of sin.<sup>5</sup> Pelagius, however, far outdid Augustine by affirming the perfect sinlessness of Mary. He repudiated the dogma of original sin altogether. After Pelagius the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the virgin was held in abeyance, and did not become prominent till the twelfth century. We shall hear of it again.

Augustine prepares the way for the immaculate conception, but does not endorse it fully.

It accords with Pelagius's system to affirm it. After him it falls into abeyance.

The next stage in the singular development we are tracing is the emergence of *Mary worship*. There are few signs of its existence prior to the time of the Nestorian controversy.

<sup>1</sup> "Marcion," iv., 19; "De Carne Christi," vii.

<sup>2</sup> "Epist. 42 ad Siricum."

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xxxvi., 42.

<sup>4</sup> "De Gen. ad Litt.," x. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Enarrat. in Ps. 34, v. 13.

The earliest appearance of Mary worship is in a heretical sect in Arabia.

We have indeed in the prayers of Ephraim Syrus an invocation to Mary and the saints, and in Gregory Nazianzen mention of a person who prayed to her—both of these towards the end of the fourth century. But in the writings of Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, and Augustine we have no suggestion of even an invocation to Mary. The very earliest appearance of Mary worship occurred in Arabia, where, Epiphanius informs us, there existed in the fourth century a heretical female sect which worshipped the Virgin Mary in a form very noteworthy. Referring to this sect in Arabia Duchesne says: "For the first time we find mention of a *cultus* devoted to Mary, the mother of the Saviour. Naturally it was women who inaugurated it. They had imported it, it would seem, from Thrace and from Scythia. The cult consisted in an annual festival. The people assembled around a kind of throne, mounted on a wheel, and offered to the Virgin Mother cakes specially prepared which were called 'callyrides.' There was a complete liturgical rite which women alone could celebrate."<sup>1</sup> Very suggestive is the form which the worship takes—the offering of cakes, prepared in some peculiar way, just as in the heathen cult cakes were offered to Ceres, reminding us, too, of Jeremiah's reference<sup>2</sup> to the "cakes offered to the queen of heaven" (*i.e.*, Astarte), and other mythological analogies. Was the name "Queen of Heaven" given to Mary, suggested by the title which from early times belonged to Astarte, the Syrian goddess, the original of the Greek Aphrodite or Venus? It is a most significant piece of information, enabling us to trace Mariolatry to its exact pagan source. Epiphanius, while condemning and refuting the heresy of the "Callyridians," condemns at the same time the adoration of Mary in any shape, declaring that she is to be honoured, but not worshipped. "Mary," he says, "is to be held in honour; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, are to be worshipped, but let no one worship Mary" (*τὴν δὲ Μαρίαν οὐδείς προσκυνεῖτω*).

The overthrow of Nestorianism the victory of Mary worship.

As a matter of fact, however, the turning point for Mariolatry came with the adoption of the term *θεότοκος* = "mother of God," as the proper designation of Mary by the Council of Ephesus in 431, which at the same time condemned Nestorius. "The overthrow of Nestorianism was the victory of Mary worship." The close conjunction of

<sup>1</sup> Duchesne's "Early History of the Church," Vol. II., p. 492, Engl. Trans.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xlv. 19.

deity with Mary in the title "mother of God" had a profound influence on the Church. "There was from this time a growing tendency in the Catholic Church, both in the East and in the West, to exalt the Virgin Mother to an equality with deity.<sup>1</sup> Among the significant products of this mood were the *Te Deum* of Mary, where her name was substituted for that of God, and the *Psalter* of Mary, where the same substitution gave her the highest divine honours."<sup>2</sup> No epithets or titles are too strong or extravagant to be applied to her by men like Cyril of Alexandria, Proclus, and Ephraim Syrus. Cyril describes her as the crown of virginity, the dwelling-place of the Holy Trinity, the bridge from God to man, the loom of the incarnation, through whom the Blessed Trinity is glorified and worshipped, through whom heaven rejoices and angels and archangels are glad, through whom the devil is disarmed and banished, through whom the fallen creature is restored to heaven, through whom every believing soul is saved.<sup>3</sup>

The highest Divine honours paid her by Cyril and others.

The great church at Ephesus, in which the Council was held, and many other churches and altars were now dedicated to her. Justinian I. in a law passed by him besought her intercession with God for the restoration of the Empire, and in dedicating an altar in the great church of St. Sophia expressed his anticipation of the great blessings for Church and Empire that would be secured by her powerful intercession. His famous general, Narses, would not go into battle till he had made sure of her protection. The images of Mary, which were represented to have come originally from the evangelist Luke, were made the objects of worship, and in the legends of the Middle Ages were credited with performing countless miracles. Ambrose so early as the fourth century attributed a certain *saving power* to her, and this idea became greatly amplified till in the popular belief she was regarded as a saviour only second to Christ, invested with most of His attributes. A sinless conception, a sinless birth, an absolutely immaculate life, resurrection and ascension to heaven, the glory and majesty appropriate to the queen of heaven, and participation of all power in heaven and in earth were imputed to her. She became the great object of popular devotion, and the Greek Church and the Roman vied with one another

Great churches dedicated to her. Her intercession sought for the Empire.

The great general Narses requires her help in battle.

Her images made objects of worship.

Saving power attributed to her.

<sup>1</sup> For its various manifestations, cf. Tyler, "Primitive Christian Worship."

<sup>2</sup> Allen's "Christian Institutions," p. 459, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> "Encomium in Sanctam Mariam Deiparam," in tom. v., Pars ii., p. 380, in Migne.

Bernard of  
Clairvaux's  
view of her.

Damiani's  
teaching.

The abbot  
Adam's  
representa-  
tion.

By the  
monk  
Nicholas  
she is  
deified.

Amorous  
passion  
blasphemously  
attributed  
to God in  
wooing her.

in their apotheosis of the mother of God with the child Jesus in her arms. Bernard of Clairvaux says that God desired that we should have everything through Mary. "Christ is indeed given as Mediator to sinful man recoiling in terror before God the Father; but the Divine Majesty of Christ also awes the sinner, and he therefore seeks an intercessor with Him; he flees to Mary, whose pure humanity the Son also honours. The Son hears the mother, the Father the Son; this ladder for the sinner is my whole hope." What an idea of both the Father and the Son is embodied in this teaching! How utterly at variance with the New Testament representations of these Divine persons! Damiani sees in Mary the tangible representative of Divine power for the redemption of men, and offers her a corresponding tribute of sensuous devotion. He composed a special *Officium S. Mariæ*, containing prayers and hymns to her which were sung in the canonical hours; and this, with other signs of devotion, such as the bowing of the head or knee at every mention of her name, was soon naturalised in the monasteries. In the *Mariale* or Sermons on the Feasts of Mary, the Cistercian abbot Adam compares the mother of God as a *rod* out of the root of Jesse with her son as the *axe*. The rod strikes mercifully in order to improve, the axe strikes to annihilate in fury and wrath. In the sermons of the Cistercian Nicholas, a contemporary of Bernard, Mary is a perfectly deified being, to whom nothing is impossible. God stands, silent and perplexed on account of the Fall, in the midst of the angels; then Mary is born, and grows into a gloriously marriageable virgin, whom God draws to Himself, wooing her with the words of Ps. xlv. Burning for her with ardent love He sings the marriage song (Epithalamium), *i.e.*, the Song of Songs, in which He can no longer conceal His passion. Then the decree of redemption is proclaimed; through Mary, in her and from her and with her, the whole decree of redemption is carried out. With regard to the relations between the Deity and Mary expressions are used quite impossible to be reproduced here.<sup>1</sup> The adoration of Mary appears in its most hyperbolical form in Bonaventura, to whom, however, is wrongly attributed the *Psalter* of Mary, in which the adoration of God in the Book of Psalms is in travesty referred to Mary. In the *Minnesong* of the thirteenth century, and in the *Golden Jewelry* of

<sup>1</sup> See in Damiani, *Sermo* II, 40, 44, etc., Migne, (Lat. Ser.) vol. 144, pp. 557, 717, 736.

Conrad there is a gross sensualising of the divine mystery of the conception. The visitation of Mary by the Eternal Godhead is turned into a luscious love story :

"'Twas love that made the Ancient young  
Who was for evermore.  
From heaven above to earth He sprung," etc.<sup>1</sup>

The favourite prayer to Mary was of course that which became embodied in the *Ave Maria* which consists of three parts :

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and in the hour of death, Amen."

The *Ave Maria*

And very significant it is that in the worship of the Church the *Ave Maria* runs parallel with the *Pater Noster*, just as the series of festivals of Mary—the Feast of the Annunciation of Mary, of the Purification of Mary, the Nativity of Mary, the Presentation of Mary, the Visitation of Mary, the Ascension or Assumption of Mary, and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception—run parallel in a measure with the Festivals of the Birth, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ. Bishop Odo, of Paris, commanded the priests to teach the people the *Ave Maria* as well as the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. The frequent repetition of the same prayer was prescribed as a meritorious performance, and with the frequent repetition came the use of the "Rosary," by means of which the number of Aves and Pater Nosters can be counted. Its use was recommended by the Dominicans.

runs parallel with the *Pater Noster*, and the festivals of Mary with those of Christ.

We come now to the latest development of all. We have seen that from the time of Pelagius the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary in her mother's womb remained in abeyance till 1140, when Canons were passed at Lyons affirming this doctrine. Actual sinlessness had been long imputed to her, but her freedom from original sin had been gravely doubted. The idea of her consecration in her mother's womb had been put forward, but Anselm in his *Cur Deus Homo* <sup>2</sup> maintained that Mary was born with the taint of original sin in her nature. So now Bernard of Clairvaux <sup>3</sup> opposed the Canons of Lyons, and the "immaculate conception" as an objectionable innovation. In view of the case of Jeremiah, <sup>4</sup> "Before

The latest development of all the "immaculate conception." Her freedom from original sin long doubted. Anselm questions it, and St. Bernard.

<sup>1</sup> For a still fuller statement on this subject see Moeller's "History of the Christian Church," Middle Ages, pp. 334 seq.

<sup>2</sup> II., 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 74.

<sup>4</sup> Jer. i. 5.

Bernard's  
view.

A subject  
of conten-  
tion be-  
tween Fran-  
ciscans and  
Dominicans.  
Opposed by  
Bona-  
ventura and  
Aquinas.

Taught by  
the Scotists.

Promul-  
gated by  
Pius IX. in  
1854.

Summary of  
the history  
by Schaff.

thou camest forth from the womb I sanctified thee," and of the case of John the Baptist, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb,"<sup>1</sup> Bernard preferred to regard the child Mary as consecrated in her mother's womb; and other theologians in the twelfth century agreed with Bernard's opposition to the doctrine of the immaculate conception. In 1263 the General Council of the Franciscans declared in favour of it, and it continued a subject of controversy between the Franciscans and the Dominicans. The doctrine was rejected even by Bonaventura; and Thomas Aquinas very emphatically opposed it, although he advocated the offering to Mary the worship of *hyperdulia*—a greater degree of worship than that given to the highest of the saints. Duns Scotus in a somewhat qualified way justified the doctrine, which thenceforward became a distinctive tenet of the Scotists, but the Dominicans continued to oppose it till quite recent times. But finally in 1854, in the presence of some two hundred bishops, Pope Pius IX. promulgated the dogma in a Papal Bull, affirming it to be a revealed truth that the Blessed Virgin from the first moment of her conception "was preserved free from all original sin," and that all who think otherwise have made shipwreck of the faith, and have fallen away from the unity of the Church. Ten years later Pope Pius sent forth his famous Encyclical, with its Syllabus of Errors, wherein he exhorts all Catholics to resort to the Virgin Mary as their "Mediatrice" with Christ.

We cannot better sum up the outcome of our survey of the successive steps in the marvellous evolution than in the words of Dr. Philip Schaff: "After the middle of the fourth century it [the Catholic Church] overstepped the wholesome Biblical limit, and transformed the 'mother of the Lord' into the 'mother of God'; the humble 'handmaid of the Lord' into a 'Queen of heaven'; the 'highly favoured' into a Dispenser of favours; the 'blessed among women' into an Intercessor above all women; nay, we may almost say, the redeemed daughter of fallen Adam, who is nowhere in Holy Scripture excepted from the universal sinfulness, into a sinlessly holy Co-Redeemer. At first she was acquitted only of actual sin, afterward even of original; though the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin was long contested, and was not established as an article of faith in the Roman Church till 1854. Thus the veneration of Mary gradually

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 15.

degenerated into the worship of Mary ; and this took so deep hold upon the popular religious life in the Middle Ages, that, in spite of all scholastic distinctions between *latria*, *dulia*, and *hyperdulia*, Mariolatry practically prevailed over the worship of Christ. Hence in the innumerable Madonnas of Catholic art the human mother is the principal figure, and the Divine Child accessory. The Romish devotions scarcely utter a *Pater Noster* without an *Ave Maria*, and turn even more frequently and naturally to the compassionate, tenderhearted mother for her intercessions than to the Eternal Son of God, thinking\* that in this way the desired gift is more sure to be obtained. To this day the worship of Mary is one of the principal points of separation between the Græco-Roman Catholicism and evangelical Protestantism. It is one of the strongest expressions of the fundamental Romish error of unduly exalting the human factors or instruments of redemption, and obstructing or rendering needless the immediate access of believers to Christ by thrusting in subordinate mediators. Nor can we but agree with nearly all unbiassed historians in regarding the worship of Mary as an echo of ancient heathenism. It brings plainly to mind the worship of Ceres, of Isis, and of other ancient mothers of the gods ; as the worship of saints and angels recalls the hero worship of Greece and Rome. Polytheism was so deeply rooted among the people that it reproduced itself in Christian forms. The popular religious want had accustomed itself even to female deities, and very naturally betook itself first of all to Mary, the highly favoured and blessed mother of the Divine-human Redeemer, as the worthiest object of adoration." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Schaff's "History of the Church, Nicene and Post-Nicene," vol. I., p. 410.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE RITUAL USE OF INCENSE AND HOLY WATER, AND OF THE ADORATION OF THE CROSS

#### I. *The Ceremonial Use of Incense*

No trace of the use of incense in Christian worship in the first four centuries. It is expressly repudiated by Athenagoras ; by Tertullian ;

by Clement of Alexandria,

Arnobius.

THERE is absolutely no trace of the use of incense in Christian worship in the first four centuries or so. The Christian Fathers of that period expressly repudiate its employment in God's service, as introducing into it a pagan element associated with idol worship. Athenagoras says "The Creator and Father of the Universe does not require blood, nor smoke, nor the sweet smell of flowers and incense." <sup>1</sup> "I offer Him," says Tertullian, "at His own requirement that costly and noble sacrifice of prayer, despatched from a chaste body, an unstained soul, a sanctified spirit, not the few grains of incense a farthing buys, tears of an Arabian tree." <sup>2</sup> Again Tertullian says : "We certainly buy no frankincense. If the Arabians complain of this, let the Sabæans be well assured that their more precious and costly merchandise is lavished on the burying of Christians rather than in burning incense to the gods." <sup>3</sup> Clement of Alexandria, contrasting the worship of Christians with that of the heathen, says : "The true holy altar is the just soul, and the perfume from it holy prayer." <sup>4</sup> "If then they should say that the great High Priest, the Lord, offers to God the incense of sweet smell, let them not suppose that the Lord offers the sacrifice and sweet smell of incense, but let them understand that He offers on the altar the acceptable gift of charity and spiritual perfume." <sup>5</sup> Of the use of incense among the heathen Arnobius says : "It is almost a new thing, nor is the term of years impossible to be traced since the knowledge of it flowed into these parts. But if in the olden time neither men nor gods sought after the matter of this frankincense, it is proved that it is vainly and to no purpose

<sup>1</sup> "Legatio," 13.

<sup>2</sup> "Apol.," 30.

<sup>3</sup> "Apol.," 43.

<sup>4</sup> "Strom.," lib. vii., c. 6, 32.

<sup>5</sup> "Pæd.," lib. ii., c. 8, 67.

offered now." <sup>1</sup> Says Lactantius: "It follows that I Lactantius. show what is the true sacrifice of God . . . lest any one should think that either victims or odours, or precious gifts are desired by God. . . . This is the true sacrifice, not that which is brought out of the chest, but that which is brought out of the heart." <sup>2</sup> Again: "We go not into Arabia," says Augustine, "to seek for frankincense, nor do we ransack the packs of the greedy trader. God requires of us the sacrifice of praise." <sup>3</sup>

The earliest writer who records the use of incense in Christian worship is the pseudo-Dionysius, who, writing early in the sixth century, says: "The chief priest (*i.e.*, the bishop), having made an end of prayer at the Divine altar, begins the censuring with it, and goes over the whole circuit of the sacred place." <sup>4</sup> The *Ordo Romanus* supposed to have been compiled about 730, directs that in pontifical masses a sub-deacon bearing a golden censer shall go before the bishop" (*i.e.*, of Rome), etc. A later revision of the *Ordo* says: "After the Gospel has been read . . . the thuribles are carried about the altar, and afterwards taken to the nostrils of persons, and the smoke is drawn up towards the face by the hand"—the origin, it has been conjectured, of the ceremonial censuring of *persons* in the West. In the same *Ordo* is an instruction that after the oblates and the chalice have been set on the altar, with a view to their consecration, "the incense be put on the altar," *i.e.*, probably for the purpose of "censuring the gifts." The *Missa Illyrici* directs the priest to say, when the incense is burnt, "Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense." <sup>5</sup> In other "Orders" the incense is referred to as representing the influence of the Holy Spirit on the soul. It is thought probable that at this time, and for long after it, the ritual use of incense was confined to the Roman Church. There is no trace of it in the Gallican Liturgies, nor in works treating of ritual.

The earliest writer who records its use in Christian worship is pseudo-Dionysius in sixth century. Directions for its use in the *Ordo Romanus* (eighth century);

in the *Missa Illyrici*, and other "Orders."

Believed to have been confined at this time to the Roman Church.

As to the occasion of its introduction into Christian worship, it has been suggested that it may have been first used as a disinfectant, and to counteract unpleasant or unhealthy odours; and in support of this view a statement is cited from Tertullian who says: "If the smell of any place offends me I burn the Arabian product myself, but not with

Cause of its introduction; perhaps at first as a disinfectant.

<sup>1</sup> "Adv. Gentes," lib. vii.

<sup>2</sup> "Diom. Inst. Epit.," c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Enarr. in Ps. 49.

<sup>4</sup> "Hierarch. Eccles.," iii., 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. cxli. 2.

But its symbolic use in Jewish and pagan worship may have been supposed to justify it.

Its use in the worship of the Latin Church.

the same ceremony, nor in the same dress, nor with the same pomp with which it is done before idols." <sup>1</sup> It may have found its way into Christian worship through its employment in connection with the dead, and at funerals. There was a natural sanitary reason for its being had recourse to on such occasions, both to ward off infection and to overcome offensive smells. But it is impossible to dissociate its mystic and symbolic significance in Christian worship from its similar purpose both in Jewish sacrifice and in pagan cults. The great number of Christians who had grown up familiar with its large employment in the ceremonial of idolatrous worship would regard its introduction into Christian services, and especially in connection with sacrifice, as a matter of course; and such references to it as we have in Ps. cxli. 2 and Rev. viii. 3, 4 would serve to commend it to them. In Roman Catholic worship incense is used in high mass, in connection with the sacrifice of the altar, in the consecration of churches, in the consecration of objects used in worship, as well as in the burial of the dead. According to the Roman ritual not only altars and gifts, but books and *persons* are "smoked" or "censed" with burning incense. The celebrating bishop or priest and inferior ministers are "censed"; prelates, princes and other dignitaries, are "censed"; and there is a general "censing" of the whole congregation. And the Roman service books indicate still another purpose which the incense was intended to fulfil. From an early time it was believed that the odours of incense were the means of driving away demons and evil spirits. In the apocryphal book of Tobit the young man Tobias, the son of Tobit, is informed: "When thou shalt come into the marriage-chamber, thou shalt take the ashes of perfume, and shalt lay upon them some of the heart and liver of the fish [a certain fish which had been caught], and shalt make a smoke with it; and the devil shall smell it, and flee away, and never come again any more." <sup>2</sup> Similarly the Latin Church is directed to bless a mixture of spices, pitch, burnt sugar, and other articles, describing it as "incense" "that all spirits of diseases, and all spirits of infirmity, and the ensnaring emissaries of the enemy, smelling its odours, may flee away." <sup>3</sup>

No comment could make more glaringly manifest the

<sup>1</sup> "De Corona Mil.," 10.

<sup>2</sup> Tobit. vi. 16, 17.

<sup>3</sup> "Pontif. Rom.," Second Part.

absurdity of such devices, which belong to a peculiarly debased and low religious type.

## 2. *The Ceremonial Use of Holy Water*

The introduction of the ritual use of water into the Christian Church is traceable to two sources. (1) One was the Jewish custom under the Mosaic law, which forbade a person ceremonially unclean—one, for example, who had touched a dead body—to enter the sanctuary or unite with the congregation, until he had undergone purification by sprinkling or washing with water, for which purpose a laver of brass for water was placed between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar.<sup>1</sup> (2) In like manner the courts of pagan temples were provided with water for purifying purposes, and the priest was accustomed to sprinkle the worshippers as they entered. The historian Sozomen mentions that when the Emperor Julian was about to enter a temple in Gaul “a priest holding green boughs wet with water sprinkled those who went in after the Græcian manner.”<sup>2</sup>

The ritual use of water in the Church derived from two sources:  
1. Jewish ceremonial.

2. Pagan ceremonial.

Certain Gnostic sects also attached special value to the use of water, regarding it as lustral and sanctifying in its influence. According to Epiphanius, the Ebionites bathed in water daily, evidently with the idea that they thereby underwent purification.

The immediate channel or medium, however, through which the idea of “holy water,” and the virtue inhering in it, came into the Church, was in all probability the supposed effect of baptismal water, or water blessed by the priest. We have seen already, when discussing the subject of Christian baptism, Tertullian’s theory and significant statements with regard to water. In answer to the question, “Why should water be chosen as a vehicle of Divine operation?” he recalls how at the beginning “the Spirit of God brooded on the face of the waters”<sup>3</sup>; how the waters were the first to receive the precept to “bring forth living creatures”<sup>4</sup>; from which he infers that there is a close affinity between water and the Spirit; that it is necessary that “the underlying material substance should catch the quality of that which broods on it.” “All waters, therefore, in virtue of the pristine privilege of their origin do,

The idea of “holy water” probably came into the Church through the blessing of the baptismal water by the priest.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxx. 18; Num. xix. 11—13.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. i. 2.

<sup>2</sup> “Hist. Eccles.,” vi., 6.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. i. 20.

after invocation of God, attain the sacramental power of sanctification. . . . And being thus sanctified, they imbibe at the same time the power of sanctifying." "It is true," he says, "the evil angel" (the devil, that is) "holds frequent profane commerce with the self-same element to man's ruin." Hence the sacred purifying rites of Isis and Mithras. But on the benediction of the water, and after it is thus consecrated, and the evil spirit exorcised, "a holy angel endues the water with medicinal virtue." (See the prayers already cited from the older Latin service books, exorcising the demon from the water, and imparting to it regenerating and medicinal virtue.) It was indeed but "a short step" to assume that the water used at baptism "might have virtue available for the benefit of others than those who were baptised in it." Gregory of Tours tells of a font which was every year miraculously filled with water for the Easter baptisms. From this font, after it had been duly exorcised and sprinkled with chrism, every one "carried away a vessel full for the safety of his house, and with a view to protect his fields and vineyards by that most wholesome aspersion." In the Latin Church there is a solemn blessing of water in the service of Easter, that is, the service of Holy Saturday, but the ceremonial blessing of the water is repeated by the priest as often as it is needed; and the water thus blessed is placed in fonts, called "benitiers," at the doors of churches, so that the worshippers may sprinkle themselves with it as they enter. Before high mass on Sundays the celebrant sprinkles the people with holy water, as is done also on almost every occasion of special blessing by the Church. The custom of sprinkling the hands and face with water before entering the Church is mentioned so early as by Tertullian about the end of the second century, and the previous blessing of the water so used is mentioned by Jerome, and also in the *Apostolical Constitutions*.

Then assumed that the water used in baptism might have virtue in it for others than the baptised.

Hence fonts at doors of churches from which the worshippers sprinkled themselves.

At Rome water blessed by the priest taken to sprinkle on houses, vineyards and fields, etc., with miraculous effects.

At Rome, after the consecration of the water on Easter Eve (according to the Roman *Ordo*), "the whole people, whoever wished, took a blessing in their vessels of the water itself before the children were baptised in it, to sprinkle about their houses and vineyards and fields and fruits." Having been already blessed, or consecrated, it was regarded as holy, and as possessing a magical or miraculous virtue. We hear of many miracles being wrought by means of it. Epiphanius tells of an insane person in the time of Constantine being sprinkled with water, over which the sign of

the cross had been made, and of his being effectually cured thereby; and Gregory of Tours mentions the case of a recluse who, by giving those suffering from quartan fever water to drink that had been blessed by him, restored them to health.<sup>1</sup>

The following are the directions given for the making of holy water and holy oil in the *Apostolical Constitutions*: "Concerning the water and the oil, I Matthias make a constitution. Let the bishop bless the water and the oil. But if he be not there, let the presbyter bless it, the deacon standing by. But if the bishop be present, let the presbyter and the deacon stand by, and let him say thus: O Lord of hosts, the God of powers, the Creator of the waters and the Supplier of oil, who art compassionate and a lover of mankind, who hast given water for drink and for cleansing, and oil to give man a cheerful and joyful countenance, do thou now also sanctify this water and this oil through thy Christ, in the name of him or her that has offered them, and grant them a power to restore health, to drive away diseases, to banish demons, and to disperse all snares through Christ our Hope."<sup>2</sup> In the Gelasian and Gregorian *Sacramentaries* there are also forms for blessing, exorcising, and sanctifying the water.

Directions for the making of "holy water" and "holy oil."

### 3. *The Superstitious Use and Adoration of the Cross*

In the New Testament the cross is referred to as a symbol of our Lord's death and sacrifice for sin. When the apostle describes "the preaching of the cross" as "foolishness," and says that he "glories" in the "cross," it is obvious that he is using the word as a synonym and symbol for the death of Christ. This symbolical use of the word and of the thing is of course common in the early Church, as we see by the Christian literature and the catacombs, although in the earlier catacombs the symbol is disguised. It is habitually used along with the monogram of Christ, and used to represent His person and work. Apart from the monogram it occurs (as with the apostle) as a symbol of the death and sacrifice of the Saviour. In fact, in this sense the early Christian writers see the cross everywhere, and in everything; and they are not unaware of the religious use of the cross as a mystic sign and talisman in

In the New Testament the cross a symbol of the death of Christ.

The cross used as a mystic sign in pagan cults prior to Christ.

<sup>1</sup> For other such cases, see "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," p. 778.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. viii., c. 29.

certain pagan cults, a use of it even prior to the Christian era.

The public official use of the cross begins with Constantine. The sign used by him called "labarum."

The public and official use of it as a Christian symbol begins with Constantine, whose military standard had the sacred monogram of the name of Christ (**☩**, **☩**) inscribed on it after his victory over Maxentius. Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine* has a minute description of it.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor had it impressed also on the shields and arms of his soldiers, while he had large crosses set up in public places and on public buildings.

Tertullian tells of the sign of the cross being made on all occasions.

But even prior to Constantine's public recognition of it, we have a very interesting and suggestive reference by Tertullian to the common use of the sign of the cross on all important and even on trivial occasions. "At every forward step and movement," he says, "at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign of the cross."<sup>2</sup> The natural reference to the cross as an appropriate symbol of the death and sacrifice of our Lord thus passed easily into the superstitious use of the sign of the cross as a sort of talisman or charm, with magical and miraculous effects in protecting against all sorts of peril bodily and spiritual. And there can be no doubt that this new element in the evolution, this novel and superstitious employment of the sign—"crossing oneself"—found its way into Christian usage from a pagan quarter.

Soon used as a charm or talisman with miraculous effects.

The "Invention of the Cross" by the Empress Helena, and the effect of it.

In the family of Constantine himself an incident occurred which soon led to a still further stage in the evolution, and imported a new and noxious element into it; and one equally alien to the spirit of Christianity. This is what is known in ecclesiastical history as "*the Invention of the Cross*," that is, the alleged discovery or finding of the true cross of Christ at Jerusalem. Tradition represents the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, as visiting Palestine in the year 326, when she was very advanced in age, and as discovering the veritable cross on which Jesus suffered. According to the legend three crosses were found, but which of the three it was on which the Saviour died was not known. To ascertain which was the true cross of Christ all the three were offered to the touch of a lady in Jerusalem who was supposed to be at the point of death.

<sup>1</sup> "Vit. Const.," lib. i., c. 31.

<sup>2</sup> "De Corona Mil.," 3.

The first two offered to her touch had no effect, but at the touch of the third the dying woman was immediately and perfectly healed. Part of the cross was kept in Jerusalem, and the remainder, with the nails which fastened the Lord to it, was sent to Constantine. One of the nails was attached to his helmet, and another to the bridle of his horse. Now the earliest authentic account we have of the search for the Holy Sepulchre is given by Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine*, with whom he was most intimate; but he makes no mention whatever of a discovery of the cross by the Empress-mother. Had a real discovery of it been made by Helena it is certain some mention of the circumstance would have been made by Eusebius. The earliest reference to it on record is made by Cyril of Jerusalem more than twenty years after the alleged discovery in a letter to the Emperor Constantius. The "discovery" of which he speaks was prior to Cyril's time. It is thus purely legendary; but from this time an extraordinary quantity of what were represented as fragments of the true cross was carried to all parts of Christendom; and after Cyril's story no one called in question the miraculous virtue that resided in them. The cross itself indeed, as has been suggested, must have budded and branched out in the most miraculous manner, for when many centuries later an immense succession of crusaders visited Palestine, they brought back with them such a multitude of the fragments of the true cross as even the forest of Lebanon itself would have failed to produce!

The story  
legendary.

But after  
Cyril's state-  
ment its  
miraculous  
virtue not  
questioned.

And the result was that *adoration* of the cross which now became general. The "adoration" of the cross, indeed, was not introduced without strong opposition and vigorous protests. When a fragment of the cross was given to St. Radegund by the Eastern Emperor Justin II., and she wished to have it received with appropriate honour into the city of Poitiers, the bishop, Maroveus, peremptorily refused to permit it. St. Radegund thereupon appealed to King Sigebert, who ordered the Archbishop of Tours to receive it in proper fashion; but the bishop left the city rather than lend his sanction to what he regarded as a superstitious proceeding. It should be added that the celebrated hymn *Vexilla regis* was composed by Venantius Fortunatus for the occasion, and first sung at the great procession which brought the supposed piece of the true cross into Poitiers.

Then  
followed the  
adoration  
of the cross,  
which was  
strongly  
opposed,

but never-  
theless con-  
tinued.

Ambrose writing of Helena's "invention of the true cross". Ambrose.



says of her: "Regem adoravit, non lignum utique, quia hic Gentilis est error et vanitas impiorum; sed adoravit illum qui pependit in ligno, scriptus in titulo,"<sup>1</sup> and he tells how the cross was placed upon kings by Helena "ut in regibus adoretur." Jerome, too, in his epitaph describes Paula as "prostrata ante crucem quasi pendentem Dominum cerneret, adorabat." Cyril of Alexandria practically admits the adoration. The Church historians, Sozomen and Evagrius, relate incidents which refer to the miraculous power inherent in the symbol. Bede tells us of Oswald, a Saxon King (635 A.D.) who, being in imminent danger in war, erected and offered adoration to a cross, and thus secured victory.<sup>2</sup> In the Trullan Council it was decreed that since the Cross shows us the way of salvation, and therefore in words and in thought we offer it our adoration, it should be prohibited to engrave crosses on the pavement, where they should be trodden underfoot. But very emphatically and explicitly is the adoration of the Cross inculcated in the ancient Liturgies. From the Gregorian *Sacramentary* we learn that on Good Friday at Vespers a cross is set up in front of the altar, and that then "venit Pontifex, adoratum deosculatur crucem. Deinde episcopi, presbyteri, diaconi et ceteri per ordinem, deinde populus." In the Mozarabic Liturgy at Nones on Good Friday, at a certain stage, the priest having reverently placed the cross in front of the altar, "statim presbyteri cum suis ministris adorent crucem flectendo genua ter cum summa reverentia et humilitate osculando terram, et offerant oblationem cruci, ut aliis præbeant exemplum." The Collect for the Festival of the Exaltation of the Cross in the Gregorian *Sacramentary* says: "Concede propitius ut, qui ad adorandum vivificam ejus crucem adveniunt, etc." At the end of the Mass on that day a cross was held up by the Pontiff for the adoration of the people.<sup>3</sup>

Jerome.

Cyril of Alexandria, Sozomen and Bede testify to its adoration as well as its miraculous virtue.

The ancient Liturgies—the Gregorian *Sacramentary*, the Mozarabic Liturgy, etc.,—inculcated the worship of the Cross.

The Pope himself holds it up for the adoration of the people. Transition from cross to crucifix.

The transition from the cross to the crucifix (*i.e.*, a cross with the effigy of Christ fixed upon it) was somewhat slow and gradual. It would seem that the crucifix began to take the place of the cross already in the time of Constantine, but it was not till the Carolingian period that it became general in the Latin Church. In Roman Catholic

<sup>1</sup> "De ob. Theodosii," 46.

<sup>2</sup> "Eccl. Hist.," iii., 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Alcuin, "Adv. Elipantum," lib. ii., 9. For a full statement on this part of the subject see article on "The Adoration of the Cross" in "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," *sub voce*.

churches the principal crucifix stands in the centre of the high altar, and in those more richly furnished the altar crucifix is for the most part of gold or silver. On the earlier crucifixes Jesus is represented as still alive, with open eyes ; on later ones He is depicted as dead.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE EVOLUTION OF FEAST DAYS AND CEREMONIAL PROCESSIONS

Nothing more characteristic of heathenism than its numerous festivals, rites, and pageants.

The Hebrews, too, had their feast days.

Apostolic teaching unfavourable to observance of feast days : what Paul says.

WITH the one exception of ancient Persia, which had no temples and no festivals, there was nothing more characteristic of heathen nations and religions generally than their numerous festival days, with their respective rites and pageants. In Egypt not only Isis and other divinities, but the innumerable deified plants, animals, stars, etc., had their appropriate festivals consecrated to them. Very numerous, too, were the feast days of the Hindu gods and goddesses. Greece had her Panathenæa, the most famous festival of Attica, celebrated at Athens in honour of Athena, the patron goddess of the city, her Bacchus celebrations, her festivals of Diana, Aphrodite, Ceres and other deities, as well as her Olympian, Nemean, Pythian, and Isthmian festivals. As Rome adopted the foreign divinities whose devotees had been conquered by her she had not only many imposing festivals of her own heroes, gods, and goddesses, but those more recently imported from foreign cults, with their several rites and pageants. The Hebrews had their feasts also, such as the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Tabernacles, with others which were post-Mosaic and historical, such as the Feasts of Purim, of Haman, and of the Maccabees. There is no doubt that both heathen and Hebrew festivals, and the rites associated with them, had a profound influence in promoting the introduction of similar festivals into the Church.

This is the more certain when we realise that there was a strong feeling in the opening centuries of the Christian era that the teaching of the New Testament was distinctly unfavourable to the observance of special festival days. When the apostle Paul says : " But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage ? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have

bestowed upon you labour in vain." ;<sup>1</sup> and again : " Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of a new moon, or of a Sabbath day : which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is Christ,"<sup>2</sup> he certainly seems to set his face against the observance of such recurring days and seasons. The early Fathers recognise this. Tertullian in view of teaching so strong and clear protests strongly against the celebration of such festival days<sup>3</sup> ; and men like Origen and Chrysostom acknowledge the force of his arguments. In the New Testament itself the only day mentioned as specially honoured and observed is the first day of the week, the day of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. The very earliest Christian festival of which we hear is Easter, but we hear of it only in the course of the second century. It is significant that the earliest literature of the subapostolic age, where, if it had been observed at all, we should have been sure to hear of it, is silent with regard to it. It is noteworthy that the *Didaché*, a Church directory, which gives directions on a great variety of subjects, such as fasting on " the fourth day and the preparation," that is, on the Wednesday and the Friday, the day of betrayal, and the day of crucifixion, makes no mention of an Easter celebration, and no mention of the Christian festival of Pentecost, which took the place of the Jewish feast of ingathering, commemorated the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and became one of the great festivals of the Christian year. In the fourth century came the feast of Epiphany, which had special reference to the appearance of Jesus to the Magi, and their adoration of Him ; and in the same century we have some trace of the Christmas festival. It is true the forged decretals ascribe the institution of the festival of the birth or nativity of Jesus to the time of Antoninus Pius (138—161), but there is no trace of it in the genuine history till much later ; and when we do begin to hear of it there is no general agreement with regard to the date. Some held the festival in April, some in May, some in January. The one thing practically certain is that the birth of our Lord could not have been on December 25th, for we are assured that the shepherds at that time could not have been watching their flocks by night. There can be little doubt that its observance on December 25th was meant to replace the *Brumalia* (or

Hence Tertullian protests against the observance of such festivals.

New Testament refers only to the first day of the week.

The *Didaché* silent even with regard to Easter.

In the fourth century came Epiphany and Christmas.

No general agreement as to the date of Christ's birth.

It appears to have replaced the *Brumalia*, and the birthday of

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 9—11.

<sup>2</sup> Col. ii. 16, 17.

<sup>3</sup> "De Jejunio adv. Psychicos," c. 14.

Mithras on  
December  
25th.  
Later come  
other  
festivals.

*Natalis Invicti* [solis], when the sun was as it were born anew), and the birthday of Mithras on December 25th.<sup>1</sup> Later still came festivals of the Cross, of the Transfiguration, of the Ascension, of the Trinity, and many others; festivals of the Apostles, of Peter and Paul, and Stephen and John the Baptist; festivals of the Angels, of Saints, and Martyrs; festivals of the Virgin, such as her Presentation, Annunciation (or Lady Day), Assumption, Visitation, Immaculate Conception. The most splendid festival of the Latin Church—that of “Corpus Christi”—with its magnificent procession, was instituted in 1264 by Pope Urban IV., in honour of the Consecration of the Host, and in order to its adoration.

Most splendid was  
“Corpus  
Christi.”

Most of  
them en-  
grafted on  
kindred  
pagan cere-  
monials.

But the thing to be chiefly noted is the extent to which these festivals were in the spirit and lineal connection of kindred pagan and Jewish institutions. A few were engrafted on Jewish; but very many on related pagan ceremonials, with an adaptation of them more or less to Christian facts and ideas. This was so even with regard to the earliest of them, Easter, which, although it took the place of the Passover, came to have many pagan usages associated with it. The very name of the festival is of pagan origin, “Ostara,” or “Eastre,” having been a chief deity among the Saxons and Angles. It is practically certain that the *Æsterfeuer*, or fire festival of “Ostara,” was held originally on May 1st, and was shifted so as to coincide with the Church festival of Easter. Easter had its fire rites incorporated in the service of the Latin Church, rites which were manifestly of pagan origin, and still survive in the lighting of bonfires at certain seasons. The Easter egg is traceable in ancient Egypt, in Persia, and among the Greeks and Romans.

Why  
Christmas  
was fixed on  
December  
25th.

As to Christmas, the fixing of it on December 25th was no doubt due to the fact that almost all heathen nations regarded the winter solstice as the critical juncture and turning-point of the year, the turning of the tidal wave of death in nature, and the beginning of a renewed life in the natural world. The Norsemen had their Yule feast to commemorate the fiery sun wheel. Many of the heathen beliefs and customs associated with that time passed over from heathenism to Christianity. The Christmas tree

<sup>1</sup> See Gwatkin's “Early Church History,” Vol. I., p. 266, and “Dictionary of Christian Antiquities,” art. “Christmas,” Vol. I., p. 357; also Sir S. Dill's “Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius,” p. 611.

with its pendant gifts is traceable to the Roman Saturnalia, and is expressly mentioned by Virgil.

Candlemas, again, the festival of the Purification of the Virgin Mary (February 2nd) was instituted by the Emperor Justinian about 541. The great festival of Purification in ancient Rome took place in February, and there can be no doubt that the Christian festival was simply an adaptation of the heathen rite. A chief feature in the celebration of it is a procession with many lighted candles—hence the name applied to the festival. The use of candles has been explained as referring to the words of the aged Simeon, when, taking the infant Jesus in his arms, he foretold that He would be a “light to lighten the Gentiles.” But that is probably an afterthought. It is customary in like manner for women on being “churched” after recovery from childbirth to carry candles with them. Candlemas.

### *The Evolution of Ceremonial Processions*

Processions are of great antiquity among the Greeks and Romans, and other ancient peoples. They were very common in connection with the festivals of their principal divinities. In the opening of spring it was usual to have their fields and vineyards sprinkled with holy water, in order to increase their fertility, and this was done generally by means of a procession, led by priests, and starting mostly from a temple, the priests carrying images of the gods and goddesses, which they desired to propitiate. In the triumphal procession from the Campus Martius to the Capitol images were also borne, incense burnt, songs chanted, and flowers strewed. Processions in like manner form an important part of the worship of Buddha. Among the Jews processions took place in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles, and from the Jews the Mohammedans are supposed to have derived their custom of encompassing the sanctuary at Mecca seven times. Processions among Greeks and Romans.

Many features of these heathen processions reappear in the Christian processions, which become common after the conversion of the Empire under Constantine, and the invasion of the Church by a multitude of converts, or nominal converts, from heathenism. We learn from Ambrose that towards the end of the fourth century such processions were organised in the West. He speaks of monks “singing psalms after ancient use and custom as they went to the celebration of the feast of Maccabean Many of these features reappear in Christian processions. Organised in the West at end of fourth century.

martyrs." About the same time we hear of the Arians at Constantinople singing hymns antiphonally as they marched through the city to their church; whereupon, to counteract the effect of such demonstrations, Chrysostom organised processions of the orthodox, in which silver crosses and lighted tapers were carried in their hands, and psalms sung by their voices.<sup>1</sup> Gregory the Great ordered a seven-fold procession, what was called the procession of the *Litania Septiformis*, on August 29th, consisting of clergy, laymen, monks, nuns, widows, matrons, poor, and children, departing in seven separate bands from seven different churches, and all to meet at the Church of St. Mary. The earliest *Ordo Romanus* describes an elaborate procession in the church before the service. "The subdeacon with a censer goes before him (the bishop) and the seven acolytes of the region, whose turn comes on that day, precede the Pontiff up to the altar, carrying seven stands of lighted wax candles. But before they come to the altar the deacons take off their planetæ in the presbytery, and the subdeacon of the region takes them, and hands them to the acolytes of the region to which they belong." Then there are processions through the church before the reading of the Gospel, after the Gospel, and after the Liturgy.

Processions  
on special  
festival  
days.

Then there are processions at special festivals. We have seen that processions were held by the Greeks and Romans in honour of gods and goddesses. So the procession on St. Mark's Day (April 25th), we are assured, was nothing more nor less than a substitute for a procession held on that day by the Romans in honour of the goddess Robigo. Processions organised to entreat the special mercy of God are described as *Litaniæ*, *Rogationes*, *Stationes*, *Supplicationes* and *Exomologeses*. There are processions both before and after the baptismal services at Easter and Pentecost, processions at the laying of the foundation stones and at the dedication of churches. From the point of view of pomp and pageantry, the most magnificent and picturesque of processions is that associated with the festival of the *Corpus Christi* already referred to. And this suggests the main effect and what is no doubt the chief purpose of such displays, a purpose in full accord with the general system of the Latin Church, namely, to impress, dazzle, and hypnotise through the medium of the senses the minds of the multitude. Thus to all intents and purposes the

Their pur-  
pose and  
effect.

<sup>1</sup> Sozomen, "Eccl. Hist.," viii., 8.

Latin Church is just Christianity stripped of not a few of its primitive and essential characteristics and then *paganised*.

In his very interesting book on *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, Mr. W. W. Fowler, M.A., has some suggestive remarks on this subject of "Processions." He points out that in certain pagan processions called "purificatory" the magical element still survived.<sup>1</sup> "The word *februum*, from which comes the name of our second month, meant an object with magical potency, such as water, fire, sulphur, laurel, wool, etc., and the word *februare* meant to get rid of certain unwholesome or miasmatic influences by means of these objects." Varro and Ovid (Fowler shows) explain them as meaning purifying agents and processes, from which we may infer that they had a magical power to produce certain desired conditions, or to protect from evil influences, like charms or amulets. *Lustratio* means purification by a solemn procession, accompanied by sacrificial victims, prayers, and libations; and *lustratio* and *lustrare* seem to belong to a time when the evil to be guarded against and driven away by such processional movement, accompanied by sacrifices, prayers, and libations, was not only physical, but spiritual. The boundary line of new settlers in Latium, for example, was made sacred, and guarded against evil influence by the passage round it (*lustratio*), usually in May, of a procession with the accompaniments just described. "These very processions of *lustratio*" (says Fowler) "were seized upon by the Roman Church with characteristic adroitness, adapted to its ritual, and given a new meaning; and the Catholic priest still leads his flock round the fields with the prayers of the *Litania Major* in Rogation Week, begging a blessing on the flocks and herds, and deprecating the anger of the Almighty."<sup>2</sup> "As the cloud-shadows still move slowly over the hollows of the Apennines, so does the procession of a patron saint pass still through the streets of many an Italian city."<sup>3</sup>

Suggestive remarks of Mr. W. W. Fowler on pagan processions.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IX., pp. 120 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Chapter IX., p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> P. 218.





## BOOK IV

THE EXTERMINATION OF HERETICS  
RAISED TO A FINE ART



## CHAPTER XX

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE HOLY OFFICE OF THE INQUISITION

WHEN Jesus said "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's,"<sup>1</sup> He gave the Civil Power a sanction and a sacredness which it never had before, but at the same time He placed limitations and bonds upon it which it had never before acknowledged. Properly regarded, it was the inauguration of a new era in the history of mankind, for it was the opening word in the announcement of the reign of spiritual freedom. And most interesting it is to observe how truly His idea was caught, and how clearly it was expounded by His apostles. When the rulers forbade them to teach in the name of Jesus, and St. Peter and the others answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men,"<sup>2</sup> the principle was for the first time asserted that there is a domain on which the civil ruler has no right to encroach—the domain of conscience under the guidance of Divine law. Still more fully and explicitly did the great apostle to the Gentiles proclaim the right and obligation of private judgment, and make individual conviction under the authoritative dominion of the law of God superior to any external authority. And when Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight," and when St. Paul said, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds . . . bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," they both emphatically condemned the use of external force, of compulsory and persecuting measures in the advancement of Christ's kingdom. The central spirit of that kingdom is love, and its members are to suffer wrong rather than inflict it.

The Civil Power recognised and sanctioned but with limits put to it by Christ.

How St. Peter and St. Paul interpret His teaching.

The use of external force and persuasion condemned.

Accordingly, while the Church continued in the first three centuries to be an *ecclesia pressa*, and was itself the victim of persecution, its leaders did not cease to have some consciousness of the great principles which our Lord and His apostles had thus inculcated. Justin Martyr,

The early Church leaders

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Acts v. 29.

plead for  
civil and  
religious  
liberty.

Tertullian, Cyprian, Minucius Felix and Lactantius in their apologies addressed to the heathen rulers plead with more or less clearness for civil and religious liberty as an inalienable and inalienable right which God has given every man, and which civil governments in their own interests should respect. Very significant it is, too, that the Church during those early centuries, although persecuted, oppressed and thwarted by the civil power *from without*, had much more freedom *within* to discuss her doctrines, express her deepest convictions, and work out the principles embodied in her institutions. Heresy and schism were indeed hated and opposed, but resisted by spiritual means, the most extreme of which was excommunication. It was held that religion was essentially a matter of individual conviction and freewill, and could be promoted only by persuasion and instruction, not by external force.<sup>1</sup> But the moment Christianity was lifted into State favour by Constantine, and became closely allied to the State, its leaders lost sight of the great principles I have indicated, and immediately began to employ the State as a coercive persecuting machine for suppressing both heathen cults and those bodies of Christians which failed to pronounce the shibboleth of what was called "Catholicity," which was itself already a most serious lapse from primitive Christianity. After the Nicene period all deviations from the faith of the State Church were treated as crimes, and punished by civil penalties. The civil and ecclesiastical realms were intermingled and confused. It is one of the saddest facts of history that for more than twelve hundred years from this date a so-called Christian Empire became as absolute, despotic, persecuting, and oppressive as the pagan Empire had ever been, and even more so than it generally was, and that in that policy it was egged on, encouraged, and driven by the Church.

But as soon as the Church becomes allied to the State it begins to use the State as a coercive machine.

The Edict of Milan gave liberty of worship to all.

But soon Edicts are issued against heathenism, and the sects outside the Catholic Church, and against heretics.

It is true that the famous Edict of Milan (313) gave unrestricted liberty to all to observe the worship which they preferred, assigning as the motive for the new measure the sacred rights of conscience. But soon a course was entered on entirely subversive of those rights. Edicts were issued not only hostile to heathenism, but with a view to suppress all services outside the body of the Catholic Church. The Donatists—the "Puritans" of that age—were harried, banished, and their churches confiscated.

<sup>1</sup> See Justin Martyr, "Apol.," I., xxiv., 12; Tertull. "Apol.," xxvi., 28; "Ad. Scap.," 2; Lactantius, "Inst.," v., 19, 20; "Epit.," 24.

And later still both Arians and orthodox were, according to the varying faith and caprice of the Emperors, harassed and persecuted.

Then came the persecuting Edicts of the *Theodosian Code*; and the ecclesiastical legislation of Theodosius (who became Emperor in 379) was, sad to say, largely due to the counsels of Ambrose and Gregory Nazianzen. His first Edict ordered that the religion which Peter taught the Romans, and which Damasus professed, should be believed of all nations; that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost should be equally adored; that all who thus worshipped should be called "Catholic" Christians, and all others "heretics," the places of assembly of the latter being denied the name of "churches," and required to be surrendered to the orthodox. It was now (382) that the ill-omened word "inquisitor" first occurs. It was applied to officers appointed to detect and punish the Manichæans. An Edict against the Apollinarians, who taught that the *Logos*, or Divine nature in Christ, took the place of the rational human soul, and that even His body was thus spiritualised and glorified—a doctrine which was construed as a denial of a true human nature in Christ—an Edict against them banished and degraded their bishops, and made the Apollinarians themselves incapable of leaving bequests. Maximus, the colleague of Theodosius, at the instigation of a Catholic bishop, caused the Spanish bishop Priscillian with six adherents to be tortured and beheaded at Treves in 385, of whom Gibbon says that "if the Priscillianists violated the laws of nature, it was not by the licentiousness, but by the severity of their lives." It was the first instance of the infliction of the death penalty on heresy by a professedly Christian prince. Jerome seeks to justify such death penalties by a reference to Deut. xiii. 6—10. Augustine, who had been previously averse to the use of force in matters of faith, changed his mind after his experience with the Donatists, and advocated recourse to compulsory measures by citing the words in the parable,<sup>1</sup> "Compel them to come in." As Neander says: "His theory contains the germ of the whole system of spiritual despotism, intolerance, and persecution, even to the court of the Inquisition." A Synod of Carthage called upon the Emperor Honorius to adopt similar measures against the Priscillianists, which he did. And soon after we have Leo the Great advocating the penalty of death for heresy.<sup>2</sup> Other

The Theodosian Code due largely to Ambrose and Gregory Nazianzen deliberately persecuting.

The use of force in religion justified by Jerome and Augustine;

and a Synod of Carthage.

And Pope Leo the Great himself advocates the

<sup>1</sup> Luke xiv. 23.

<sup>2</sup> "Epist. 185, ad Bonifacium."

death  
penalty for  
heresy.

Pagan  
temples  
overthrown  
and the  
*Serapeum*  
demolished.

The Theo-  
dosian Code  
the charter  
of the  
mediæval  
Church.

The Bull of  
Innocent  
III. in 1203  
regarded as  
the begin-  
ning of the  
Inquisition.

A special  
tribunal of  
the Inquisi-  
tion estab-  
lished by  
Gregory IX.  
in 1232, and  
Innocent  
IV. in 1248,  
and put in  
charge of the  
Dominic-  
ans.

The reason  
assigned for  
it by the  
*Catholic*  
*Dictionary*.

Edicts aimed at suppressing pagan worship, including the ruin of temples, the destruction of statues, and the like. It was now that the celebrated *Serapeum* was demolished at Alexandria; yet although the persecutions set in motion by the Theodosian Code were most severe, heathenism was not exterminated, nor heresy appreciably abated.

It was in this Code that both Church and State found their charter and guide all through the mediæval period. Heresy was put down by force, and no toleration or liberty permitted. The "Inquisition" itself was simply an elaborate embodiment of the spirit and principles of the Theodosian Code. In the early mediæval period it was regarded as the duty of the bishops in behalf of the Church to detect and expose heretics, and of the State to punish them. In 1203 Innocent III., alarmed at the spread of heresy in the South of France and in Italy, issued a Bull appointing the abbot of Cîteaux his delegate for the discovery and punishment of heresy. This is usually regarded as the beginning of the "Inquisition" as a separate institution; although the tribunal permanently established by the Council of Toulouse (1229) was properly the beginning, and the germ of it is found in the decree of Lucius (1184). As the word "Inquisition" suggests, it meant a tribunal for the searching out of heresy as well as for the punishment and suppression of it. It was still further organised by the Council of the Lateran, 1215. But in 1232 Pope Gregory IX. and in 1248 Innocent IV. established a special tribunal of the Inquisition, the chief control of it being placed in the hands of the Dominicans, who, by a play upon their name, were known as *Domini Canes*, or "watch-dogs of the Lord." One outcome of the new measures was the atrocious series of crusades against the Albigenes and other sects in the south of France, led at the bidding of the Pope by Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, and lasting for some thirty years, and by means of which these regions were laid waste, and their inhabitants, innocent or guilty, men, women, and children, "drowned in blood."

The *Catholic Dictionary* says: "The Church was as clear as ever upon the necessity of repressing heretics, but the weapon—secular sovereignty—which she had hitherto employed for the purpose, seemed to be breaking in her hands. The time was come when she was to forge a weapon of her own, to establish a tribunal, the incorruptness and fidelity of which she could trust. . . . It became evident that

so great a work as the extirpation of heresy could never be done effectually, even by the most willing servants, unless there was some one administrative power, having oversight of all. . . . It was found that in the numberless imprisonments, trials, and executions now occurring there was more than enough work provided for a distinct ecclesiastical department." Hence the Inquisition, which soon spread over almost all European lands.

While the Papal Court resided at Avignon (1309—1377) it was specially active in France, and the Albigenses and Waldenses, the Beghards and the Lollards, the Fraticelli, and the Spiritualists, were subjected to cruel torture by it, and brought in large numbers to the stake. In Germany in the latter part of the fourteenth century the number of inquisitors was increased, and their efforts much aided and furthered by Charles IV. It has been said that England never admitted or permitted the Inquisition. This is not strictly, though nearly, correct. The worthless Edward II. in 1309 authorised the Inquisitors of Pope Clement V. to enter England in order to conduct the trial of the Knights Templars, but that taste of the institution was enough for Englishmen.

During the "Babylonish captivity" it was specially active in France; also at the same time in Germany.

But one of the most terrible chapters in its dark and cruel history is that which tells of its devilish activity in Spain. It was about 1480 that under Ferdinand and Isabella it was re-established in that country, and put under the control of the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada (1483—1499). In 1481 two thousand persons are said to have been burned alive. One of his first agents was Pedro Arbires, by whose fiendish zeal many hundreds of people in the course of sixteen months had perished at the stake, when his career of blood and fire was cut short by the hands of two assassins, all whose relatives and friends to the number of two hundred were burned, while Arbires himself was beatified, and later canonised by Pius IX. in 1867. "In the eighteen years of Torquemada's administration ten thousand two hundred and twenty individuals were burned alive, and ninety-seven thousand three hundred and twenty-one punished with infamy, confiscation of property, or perpetual imprisonment, so that the total number of families destroyed by this one friar alone amounted to one hundred and fourteen thousand four hundred and one."<sup>1</sup> One of the countries which suffered bitterly from the "Holy Office" was the Netherlands. It was in fact the chief cause of

In Spain under Torquemada.

In the Netherlands.

<sup>1</sup> Motley, "Rise of the Dutch Republic," Part II., Chap. III.



the great revolt there, and of the rise of the Dutch republic.

Specially  
ferocious in  
Spain under  
Cardinal  
Ximenes.

But it was perhaps under the Grand Inquisitor Cardinal Francis Ximenes (1507—1517), by whom it is stated that 2,536 persons were burnt at the stake, and 1,368 in effigy, that the institution attained its highest, or rather its deepest, infamy. Llorente, the Spanish priest, who had been general secretary of the Inquisition at Madrid, with access to all its archives, affirms that the Spanish Inquisition, down to the date of its suppression in 1808, had executed 31,912 persons, burned in effigy 17,659, and inflicted severe punishment on 291,456. These figures have been criticised by Hefele, Ranke, Prescott, and others, but the consideration of there being a few more or less matters little.

How the  
trial was  
conducted.

The iniquity of the method of trial to which the victims were subjected was simply colossal. The proceedings were conducted in secret. The accused was kept in ignorance of the charges against him, as well as of the evidence on which the charges were based. The tribunal of monks "had its familiars in every house, diving into the secrets of every fireside, judging and executing its horrible decrees without responsibility." The accuser might be the man's own son or daughter, or the wife of his bosom; for all were required under the penalty of death to inform the Inquisitors of every suspicious word a man spoke. It was assumed from the first that he was guilty, and every effort was made to force him to confess. Persons pretending to be friendly were allowed to interview him in order to entrap him into admissions, and to frighten him with fictitious evidence. Then, when worn out by solitude, suffering, hunger and terror, he was exposed to the most cruel tortures; often fiendish in their ingenuity.

The torture  
to which  
the victim  
was exposed  
fiendish.

"The torture took place at midnight in a gloomy dungeon, dimly lighted by torches. The victim—whether man, matron, or tender virgin—was stripped naked, and stretched upon the wooden bench. Water, weights, fires, pulleys, screws—all the apparatus by which the sinews could be strained without cracking, the bones bruised without breaking, and the body racked exquisitely without giving up the ghost—were now put into operation. The executioner, enveloped in a black robe from head to foot, with his eyes glaring at his victim through holes cut in the hood which muffled his face, practised successively all the forms of torture which the devilish ingenuity of the monks had

invented. The imagination sickens when striving to keep pace with these dreadful realities." <sup>1</sup>

Scathing as they are, Dr. Gwatkin's words are amply justified: "Ghastly as the records of heathen persecution are, the work of blood was never done with the infernal thoroughness of Papal Rome." <sup>2</sup>

"Had the Son of Man been in body upon the earth during the Middle Ages, hardly one wrong and injustice would have wounded His pure soul like the system of torture. To see human beings, with the consciousness of innocence, or professing and believing the purest truths, condemned without proof to the most harrowing agonies, every groan or admission under pain used against them, their confessions distorted, their nerves so racked that they pleaded their guilt in order to end their torture, their last hours tormented by false ministers of justice or religion, who threatened eternal as well as temporal damnation, and all this going on for ages, until scarce any innocent felt themselves safe under this mockery of justice and religion—all this would have seemed to the founder of Christianity as the worst travesty of His faith and the most cruel wound to humanity." <sup>3</sup>

The procession that took place at the execution of heretics was known as the *Auto-da-Fe*. It was generally held on a Sunday, often on "All Saints' Day." The tolling of a bell at dawn was the signal for the opening of the horrible pageant. Men of the highest rank, even the Sovereign himself, found it prudent to countenance it with their presence. The procession itself was led by the Dominicans, carrying the banner of the Inquisition in the van; then followed the penitents; behind them, but separated from them by a great cross, came those condemned to death, barefooted, clad in the "san benito," with a pointed cap on the head; then effigies of the fugitives; lastly, the bones of dead culprits in black coffins, painted with hellish flames and other symbols; while an army of priests and monks formed the rear of the procession. If at the last any of the condemned professed the Catholic faith they were strangled before being burnt.

Instead of being burnt many were "immured" in cells or narrow niches made in the walls of the "house of inquisition," and kept there for years or for life. In 1312,

<sup>1</sup> Motley, "Rise of the Dutch Republic," Part II., Chap. III.

<sup>2</sup> Gwatkin's "Early Church History," Vol. I., p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Brace's "Gesta Christi," p. 274.

How would  
Jesus have  
regarded  
it?

The *Auto-  
da-Fe*.

Many  
victims  
immured in  
cells and  
narrow  
niches in  
walls.

for example, the penalty of being perpetually "immured" was inflicted on some eighty-seven persons. Three men, one of them old, and three women, two of them widows, are condemned to be "perpetually shut up in closer wall and straiter place, in fetters and chains."

Dr. Rule in his *History of the Inquisition*<sup>1</sup> gives an account of walled-up victims, the skeletons of three of which were found in the Convent of Santo Domingo in Mexico, and four in the Inquisition at Puebla. These were carefully photographed on their discovery. Dr. Rule mentions that the skeletons of about two hundred human bodies were found in a long gallery in the Inquisition at Puebla; and while these were being removed another discovery was made. "What seemed to be the interior face of the main wall, not interrupted by door or window, was for some distance smooth with a brick facing, but in some places along the smooth part the bricks had been broken away from the floor upward, disclosing spaces resembling very narrow closets, empty, as if rifled of their contents. These breakages excited suspicion that the remaining unbroken surface might cover similar recesses. Dr. Butler, therefore, had that part of the wall sounded with hammers; in four places he found it hollow, and had the bricks carefully removed. To the horror of the explorers four human bodies [or skeletons rather] met their view; one man sitting on a stone; two men standing; one woman laid on her back, with a bundle at her feet, said to contain an infant. They were all carefully removed to the public museum of the city of Mexico, where they may now be seen. . . . Dr. Butler had them immediately photographed, and with a verbal description of the discovery kindly gave me" (says Dr. Rule) "a copy of the picture in photograph, which is here repeated as closely as possible in a woodcut. . . . The niches which held three of the four were vertical, and must have resembled narrow chimney-flues, barely sufficient for a living person to stand upright, and not wide enough to allow the body to fall prone when life became extinct. Although it might bend a little, the body was held up by the sides of the tomb, and stiffened after death in the same posture that it had in its last agony." Pictures of these hideous and most suggestive skeletons, representing them in their narrow niches as they were found are before me as I write. Think of the horrible

<sup>1</sup> P. 328.

sufferings and inevitable death to which they were subjected !

By Pope Paul III. the Inquisition was re-established at Rome after the Spanish model for the extirpation of heresy in Italy disseminated by the Reformation. Under him, and under Paul IV., who described it as "the sheet-anchor of the Papacy," and under Pius V., every suspicion of Protestantism was pitilessly punished with imprisonment, torture, the galleys, and the stake, so that by the end of the sixteenth century no trace of it was to be found in Italy. One of its last victims was Aonio Paleario, poet, orator, and professor of classical literature, who, after being kept in prison for three years, was strangled and burnt. How Galileo Galilei, professor of mathematics at Pisa and Padua, a pioneer champion of the Copernican system, was threatened with the Inquisition unless he ceased to advocate the detested heresy is one of the most familiar facts of history. In 1636 Urban VIII. moved the Inquisition to institute a process against him. He was compelled to recant and condemned to prison, but was soon liberated. Whether the old man was forced to retract by torture is still a matter of controversy. What is certain is that the Congregation of the Index declared the Copernican theory to be false and contrary to Scripture, and that Pope Alexander VII. confirmed the decree, and *ex cathedra* pronounced it irrevocable !

Of the horrible doings and devastations of the Inquisition in the Netherlands, Motley in his *Rise of the Dutch Republic* gives ample and thrilling evidence. In Bohemia and Poland also it carried on its brutal and inhuman villainies.

Re-established at Rome for extirpation of Reformation teaching in Italy.

In the Netherlands, in Bohemia and Poland.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE HOLY OFFICE ECLIPSED IN THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW

THE spirit of persecution, or the purpose that was bent on exterminating all heretics by the sword, and that the most treacherous and cruel use of the sword, may be said to have reached its climax in the shocking tragedy that is known as the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

The policy of the French King at the opening of the Reformation variable

For a time conciliatory towards Protestants; then severe.

Slaughter of the Waldenses.

The fourteen of Meaux burnt alive, after fiendish tortures.

More deliberate and ferocious under Henry II. and the Guises.

The policy of Francis I. towards the new religious movement was vacillating and variable, sometimes friendly, and sometimes bitterly hostile and repressive. The *Placards* which so fiercely attacked the Mass led to extreme measures and a considerable number of people were tried and burnt. The King was for a time anxious for an alliance with the Protestants of Germany, and so conciliatory to the Protestants of France, but his policy soon changed, and royal Edicts with a view to effectually extirpate heresy were sent forth in quick succession, and the fires of persecution burned hotly. The slaughter of the Waldenses of the Durance, in which twenty-two out of thirty Waldensian villages were completely wiped out of existence, several thousands of men, women and children slain, and many sent to the galleys, was specially treacherous and brutal; while the terrible tortures associated with the persecution at Meaux were almost inconceivably fiendish.

The religious policy became at once more deliberate and more aggressively cruel and ferocious under Henry II., whose Queen was Catherine de Medici, daughter of Lorenzo de Medici, and niece of Pope Clement V., who was the bastard son of Julian de Medici. Henry's advisers, including his clever mistress Diane of Poitiers, his chief minister the Constable Montmorency, and the great family of the Guises, were all resolute on overthrowing the new movement of reform, whose adherents became known as Huguenots.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Huguenots*. Skeat mentions that some fifteen false etymologies of this word have been given. It has been supposed by some to be a corruption of the German "*Eidgenossen*" (confederates, leaguers,

A series of Edicts was now issued, aiming at the extirpation of the new faith ; and in 1547 a criminal court which was to deal only with cases of heresy, entitled *chambre ardente*, was added to the Parliament of Paris. It was instructed to sit continuously, and its first session continued from December, 1547 to January, 1550. Later, the King under the inspiration of Pope Paul IV. and the Cardinal of Lorraine, proposed to establish the Inquisition in France ; but their design was frustrated by the strong opposition of the Parliament. In spite of the most determined efforts to exterminate them, the Huguenots continued to make rapid progress, met at Paris in 1559 in their first National Synod, and compiled a Confession of Faith and Book of Discipline. They had already begun to organise themselves into congregations. They had strong and influential support. From Calvin and Beza at Geneva, both sons of France, they had warm sympathy and wise counsel. Certain members of the house of Bourbon, a powerful branch of the royal family, Antoine de Bourbon, next in the succession to Henry II., his brother Louis de Condé and others, with Jeanne d'Albret, the heiress of Navarre, who had married Antoine de Bourbon, had become adherents of the Huguenots, the wives more zealous and determined supporters than their husbands ; but more effective and more important than all other support, the Admiral Gaspard Coligny, the most powerful man then in France, became their leader.

The extirpation of the new faith attempted by a series of Edicts.

The *chambre ardente*.

The Inquisition proposed by King, but rejected.

The Huguenots organise themselves.

Guided by Calvin and Beza, and joined by members of the royal family ;

with the Admiral Coligny as leader.

Henry II. was succeeded by his son Francis II., whose wife was Mary Queen of Scots, and under the auspices and guidance of the Guises the *chambre ardente* was kept warm and busy. On the early death of Francis II., his brother Charles IX. succeeded him, with Catherine de Medici, the Queen-mother, as regent. With a view to thwarting the designs of Philip II. of Spain, whose wide realm included the Netherlands, Catherine and Charles IX. now pursued a conciliatory policy with the Protestants at home and abroad, and made treaties of alliance with England, with the Protestants in Germany, and with the House of Orange. By the Peace of St. Germain in 1570 liberty to practise their covenanted). Skeat takes the word to be a diminutive of "Hugues," "Hûg," "Hugh," and supposes that the French reformed were so called after some person of the name of "Huguenot," who was noted and conspicuous as a reformer. Murray describes it as "a word of disputed origin," and quotes a definition which combines the two given above: "According to the Hatz.-Darm. a popular alteration of the German 'eidgenossen' under the influence of the personal name of Hugues, Hugh."

Francis II. and Mary Queen of Scots.

Charles IX. and Catherine de Medici as Regent.

Profess a conciliatory policy towards Protestants.

Marriage of King's sister to Henry of Navarre. Huguenot leaders assemble in Paris for the marriage.

Catherine plotting and doing her best to detach the King from Coligny and massacre the Protestants.

Catherine's associates in the conspiracy.

religion was given to the Huguenots except in Paris and about the palace; and as a guarantee of good faith four strongholds were surrendered to them in the south of France. It was conceded also against the urgent remonstrance of the Pope, that Margaret of Valois, the King's sister, should marry Henry of Navarre, son of Jeanne d'Albret.

Never were the prospects of the Huguenots brighter or more promising than now, while Coligny was preparing to lead a great expedition into the Netherlands against Philip. The large privileges already conceded to them, and their marked progress and success, had begun to alarm their adversaries into more strenuous efforts to frustrate and crush them. Catherine, the Queen-mother and Regent, was after all no real friend of theirs: quite the contrary. While willing to employ them against Philip, she really hated them, and feared their growing power; she became alarmed at their success, intrigued against them, and did her utmost to detach her son, Charles IX., from the influence which Coligny had acquired over him; and, it is now known, was engaged in secret negotiations to destroy and exterminate the Huguenots. Associated with Catherine in the great conspiracy, it is now certain, were her favourite son, the Duke of Anjou, the Guises, Marshal Tavannes, the Dukes of Nevers and Nemours, and at last the King himself—at length won over by the persuasions and threats brought to bear on him. Such were the agents who took the leading part in starting and carrying through the hideous tragedy, but there were others who were privy to it.

Salviati, the Papal nuncio at Paris, testifies that to excuse his sister's marriage the King pleaded that it had been agreed to for no object but vengeance. The nuncio also stated that the Queen-mother (Catherine) had long before confided to him the real purpose of her daughter's engagement.<sup>1</sup> Nevers is supposed to have disgraced himself by the number of Huguenots he permitted to escape; and Salviati reported to Rome that the only person who had acted in the spirit of a Christian, and had refrained from mercy, was the King; the other princes who pretended to be good Catholics tried to save as many Huguenots as they could.<sup>2</sup>

Coligny and the Huguenot leaders had assembled in Paris in large numbers to attend the festivals connected with the wedding of Margaret of Valois with Henry of

<sup>1</sup> Acton's "History of Freedom," etc., p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

Navarre.\* The marriage took place on August 18th, 1572.

On the 22nd, a few days later, Coligny was shot at by an assassin from the window of a house belonging to a friend of the Guises, and severely wounded. On the following night, the night of St. Bartholomew, between August 23rd and 24th, the Castle bell was tolled—the concerted signal for the slaughter of all the Huguenots in Paris.

Admiral Coligny was now killed outright, run through by a pike, and his body thrown out of a window into the courtyard where Guise was waiting for it. The young Bourbon princes were given their choice between death and the Mass: they chose the latter. In the morning the chambers and staircases of the palace were dyed and drenched with blood. For four days and then for four weeks the carnage went on; and messengers were sent forth to see to it that similar scenes should be repeated in the provinces. No Huguenot, not even a woman or child, was spared. In some forty cities, including the chief provincial towns of France, the butcheries of the capital were continued, and in some cases exceeded. The number of victims has been variously given from 10,000 to 100,000.

Sully, the Prime Minister of Henry IV., who had access to the sources of knowledge, says that 70,000 perished, and the King himself admitted that he had been instrumental in putting 70,000 Huguenots to the sword.<sup>1</sup> As expressive

of his overflowing joy at the news that France had been turned into a shambles, the Pope, Gregory XIII., had Rome illuminated, the castle guns fired, a *Te Deum* performed, a medal struck with the inscription, *Ugonottorum strages*, and processions ordered; and the French ambassador was instructed to inform his King that the massacre was more grateful to him than fifty victories of Lepanto. The messenger who brought the news was rewarded with 100 crowns. On hearing of the glorious intelligence the King of Spain is said to have laughed for the first and only time in his life; to have sent immediately 6,000 crowns to the murderer of Coligny; and to have warmly complimented the King of France and his mother—the son on having such a mother, and the mother on having such a son. The Cardinal Orsini was sent from Rome to convey to Charles IX. and the Queen-mother the congratulations of the Pope and the College of Cardinals.

Was the massacre the result of sudden impulse, or was it a premeditated and deliberate crime?

Coligny wounded by an assassin on August 22nd. On 23rd the signal given for the slaughter of all Huguenots.

The massacre extended to the provinces. The extent of it.

The Pope expresses his delight,

and the King of Spain his.

Was the massacre premeditated?

<sup>1</sup> See Lord Acton's "History of Freedom," p. 137, and note.



Lord Acton gives overwhelming proof that it was.

The opinion found wide acceptance in recent times that the resolution that led to the massacre had been taken suddenly. It is not too much to say that Lord Acton has made that view no longer possible. In a characteristically learned and able essay on the subject in his *History of Freedom and Other Essays* (p. 101) he has given overwhelming and irrefragable evidence of premeditation and deliberate purpose.

Wholesale suppression of evidence.

He begins his essay by pointing out that there has been an extraordinary suppression of evidence, and on an immense scale. Some has been difficult of access, part is lost, but much has been deliberately destroyed. "No letters written from Paris at the time have been found in the Austrian archives. In the correspondence of thirteen agents of the House of Este at the Court of Rome every paper relating to the event has disappeared. All the documents of 1572 both from Rome and Paris are wanting in the archives of Venice. In the registers of many French towns the leaves which contained the records of August and September in that year have been torn out. The first reports sent to England by Walsingham and by the French Government have not been recovered. Three accounts printed at Rome, when the facts were new, speedily became so rare that they have been forgotten. The Bull of Gregory XIII. was not admitted into the official collections. The letters of Charles IX. to Rome (with one exception) have been dispersed and lost. The letters of Gregory XIII. to France have never been seen by persons willing to make them public."<sup>1</sup>

Yet more than enough remains to prove its deliberateness.

Lord Acton then proceeds to adduce the superabundant evidence which, notwithstanding the most industrious efforts to destroy it, is still existent—and after reviewing it, he affirms that "the opinion that the massacre of St. Bartholomew was a sudden and unpremeditated act cannot be maintained." I give a few examples of the facts adduced by him in evidence.

Letter from Rome to the Emperor Maximilian.

A letter from Rome to the Emperor Maximilian II. prior to the occasion, states that "at that hour [the hour of the wedding], when all the birds are in the cage, they can seize upon them all together, and can have every one they desire."<sup>2</sup> The Emperor was a man of warm evangelical sympathies, and was horrified at the proposal.

Testimony of Duplessis Mornay.

Duplessis Mornay, a future leader of the Huguenots,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Acton's "History of Freedom," etc., p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

warned the Admiral, Coligny, of the common belief among their friends that the marriage concealed a plot for their ruin, and that the festivities would end in some terrible surprise.<sup>1</sup>

"After the event, both Alva and Alfonso reminded Catherine that she had done no more than follow their advice. Alva's letter explicitly confirms the popular notion which connects the massacre with the conference of Bayonne [held in 1565]; and it can no longer now be doubted that La Roche-sur-Yon, on his deathbed, informed Coligny that murderous resolutions had been taken on that occasion."<sup>2</sup>

Testimony  
of Alva and  
Alfonso.

On March 19th Petrucci, the Tuscan agent at Rome, wrote to Florence adumbrating the contemplated event; and on August 9th he was able to report that the plan arranged at Bayonne was near execution.<sup>3</sup>

Testimony  
of Petrucci.

Giovanni Michiel, the "most illustrious statesman" of Venice, "was admitted almost daily to secret conference with Anjou, Nevers, and the group of Italians on whom the chief odium (of the massacre) rests; and there was no counsellor to whom Catherine more willingly gave ear. Michiel affirms that the intention had been long entertained, and that the nuncio had been directed to reveal it privately to Pius V."<sup>4</sup>

Testimony  
of Giovanni  
Michiel.

The Cardinal of Lorraine went to Rome in May, 1572, and "at once made it known that the resolution with regard to the massacre had been taken before he left France."<sup>5</sup>

Testimony  
of the  
Cardinal  
of Lorraine.

"The King's confessor, Sorbin, afterwards Bishop of Nevers, published in 1574 a narrative of the life and death of Charles IX. He bears unequivocal testimony that that clement and magnanimous act, for so he terms it, was resolved upon beforehand."<sup>6</sup>

Testimony  
of Sorbin,  
the King's  
confessor.

The Cardinal of Alessandria as legate to the Kings of Spain and Portugal was directed, on returning, to visit the French Court, which he did. In his last despatch on March 6th he wrote that he had failed to prevent the engagement with Navarre, but that he had something for the Pope's private ear. The King had met the earnest remonstrances of the legate by assuring him that the

Testimony  
of the  
Cardinal of  
Alessandria,  
legate of the  
Kings of  
Spain and  
Portugal.

<sup>1</sup> Acton's "History of Freedom," etc., p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

marriage afforded the only prospect of wreaking vengeance on the Huguenots. Both the Cardinal of Alessandria and Paul V. were instrumental in having it proclaimed that the legate was acquainted in February, 1572, with the intention which the King carried out in August."<sup>1</sup>

Catherine suggested the idea to the King in 1570.

The King explains his object to Mondoucet.

Lord Acton states that Catherine had long contemplated the massacre as her last expedient in extremity; and adds that she suggested the idea to the King in 1570.<sup>2</sup>

On August 26th the King fully explained his object to Mondoucet, his agent at Brussels: "Since it has pleased God to bring matters to the point they have now reached, I mean to use the opportunity to secure a perpetual repose in my kingdom, and to do something for the good of all Christendom. It is probable that the conflagration will spread to every town in France, and that they will follow the example of Paris, and lay hands on all the Protestants. I have written to the governors to assemble forces in order to cut in pieces those who may resist."<sup>3</sup>

Testimony of the General of the Franciscans.

The General of the Franciscans assured Philip, the King of Spain, that "he had seen the King and the Queen-mother two years before, and had found them already so intent on the massacre that he wondered how anybody could have the courage to detract from their merit by denying it."<sup>4</sup>

The King's "most grievous sorrow" in his last confession.

In fine, we are told that Charles IX. was much tortured in his last moments with remorse for the blood which he had shed. His spiritual adviser, Sorbin, tells us he had heard the last confession of the dying man, and that his most grievous sorrow was that he had left the work unfinished. Lord Acton adds: "In all that bloodstained history there is nothing more tragic than the scene in which the last words preparing the soul for judgment were spoken by such a confessor as Sorbin to such a penitent as Charles."

Varying moods of Rome respecting the massacre.

Lord Acton concludes his essay with an amusing account of the varying moods and attitudes of Rome in relation to the massacre.

1. The first is one of joyful gratitude and exuberant enthusiastic delight over the occurrence, a delight which found various forms of expression.

2. This earliest mood by and by gave place to another—a feeling of discontent, and dissatisfaction that, after all,

<sup>1</sup> Acton's "History of Freedom," etc., pp. 113, 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

the thing had been a failure, and the work not more than half done. Writing in the year of the King's death one person laments "the cruel clemency and inhuman mercy that reigned on St. Bartholomew's Day."

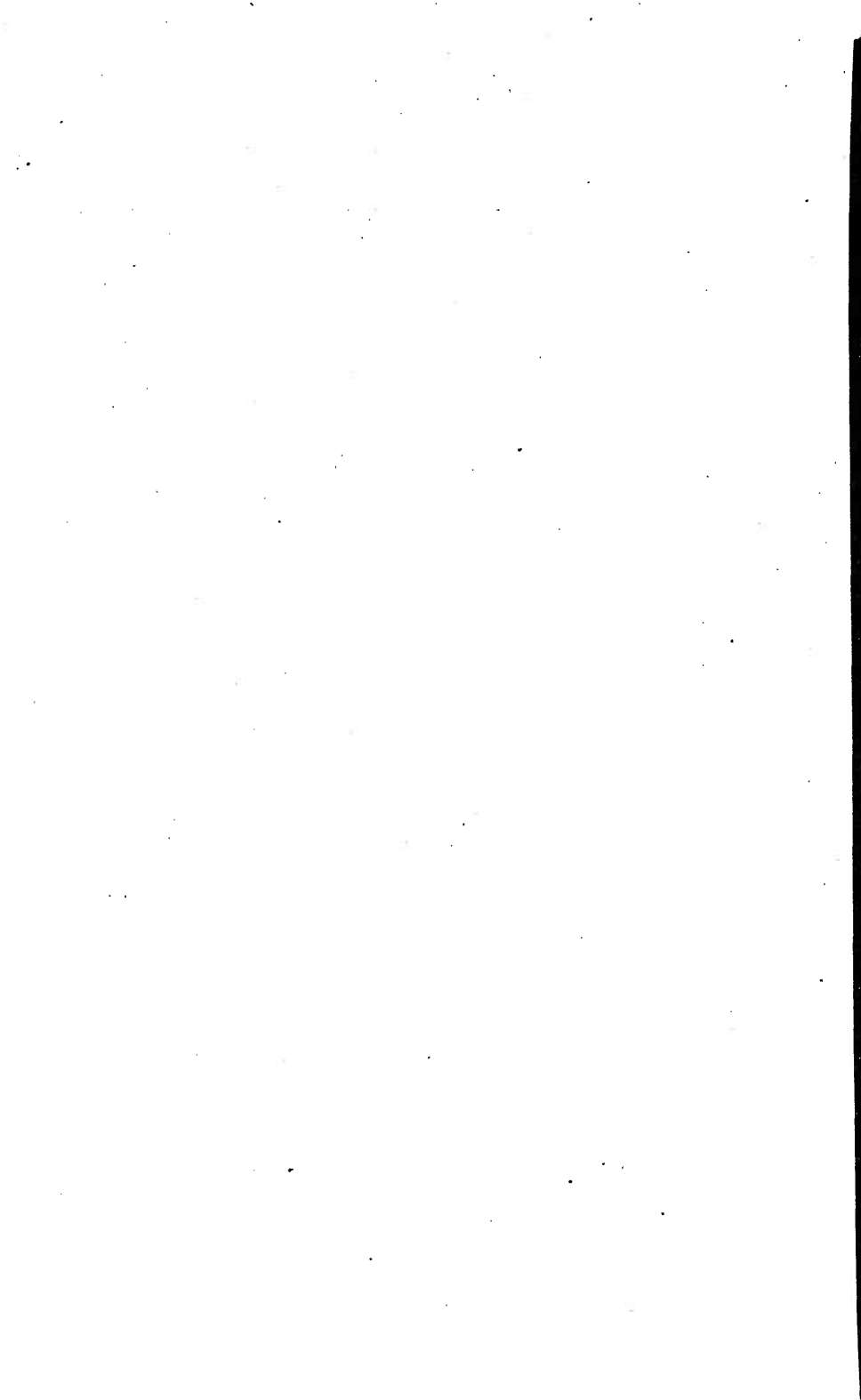
3. Later still came a notable change, when it began to be felt and recognised that the horrible transaction had indelibly engraved on it the brand of infamy. Men began to be ashamed to admit that the rulers of their Church could with some show of justice be regarded as murderers, or abettors of murder. Now the massacre had to be minimised and explained away; but the explanations supplied only food for ridicule. "The victims were few in number; the medal struck in commemoration was fictitious; the massacre itself was but a feint; the cause of the Pope's joy was the fact that the massacre had ended and was all over; and the occasion of his thanksgiving the happy circumstance that the King's life was saved."

It is something to be thankful for that such a travesty of the facts of history is no longer possible.



## BOOK V

### MODERN ULTRAMONTANE AND REAC- TIONARY DEVELOPMENTS



## CHAPTER XXII

### MODERN ULTRAMONTANE AND REACTIONARY DEVELOPMENTS

ONE might have supposed that, at so advanced a stage in the world's history and civilisation as the nineteenth century represents, movements of a grossly reactionary kind, which even the darkest of the dark ages failed to evolve, would have been impossible in a community whose eyes are apt to be so open to world currents as the Latin Church. That anticipation has been falsified by the event. When Count Mastai Ferretti became Pope in 1846 under the title of Pius IX., he was believed to be inspired by some large and generous sentiments and sympathies, and hopes were entertained that he would adopt and encourage a somewhat liberal policy. These hopes were utterly disappointed. He soon came under the influence of the Jesuits, and his policy, both civil and ecclesiastical, became ultramontane, absolutist, and reactionary in the extreme.

Pius IX., who became Pope in 1846, of whom liberal things were expected, became by the inspiration of the Jesuits ultra-montane and reactionary.

All through, indeed, the influence of the Jesuits on the worship and life of the Latin Church had been most sinister, materialising it more and more, making it more sensuous, pandering to superstition, and widening the already yawning gulf that so completely severed it from the Christianity of the New Testament. The Trinity became a Quaternity in which the cult of Mary overshadowed that of the Three Persons of the God-head. "The order gave an impulse to the worship of saints, images, and relics, to processions and pilgrimages, and rosary devotions, as well as to superstitious beliefs about wonder-working scapularies, girdles, medals, amulets and talismans, Ignatius-and-Xavier-water endowed with healing properties through contact with the relics or models of these saints. The Jesuits were also making endless discoveries of new miracle legends and relics previously unknown. They originated the worship of the heart of Jesus, renewed the practice of flagellation, gave a new vitality to the indulgence nuisance, and diligently fostered belief in sorcery, demoniacal possession, apparitions of the devil, and exorcism. They encouraged the silly

All along their influence had been sinister.

Some effects of it.



Reactionary dogmas and practices sanctioned by Pius IX. under their inspiration.

notions of the people about witches, with all their cruel and horrible consequences." <sup>1</sup> We have now to notice briefly some of the reactionary dogmas, cults, and practices expressly sanctioned by Pius IX., chiefly under the inspiration of the Jesuits.

### 1. *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary*

1. The dogma of the "Immaculate Conception"—its evolution traced in a previous chapter.

Further facts in the evolution noted.

One of the earliest important measures of Pius IX. was the promulgation of this dogma, the evolution of which has been already traced in the chapter on Mariolatry. The considerations pleaded in its favour, and the arguments adduced against it by eminent Roman Catholic theologians, such as St. Bernard, have been already indicated. We saw how it was supported by the Franciscans and the Scotists, and denied by the Thomist school, which included the Dominican order. Sixtus IV. in 1470 imposed on both sides the duty of mutual toleration. The Council of Trent declared that "in its decree of original sin" it did not comprehend the Virgin, but renewed the constitution of Sixtus IV. Towards the end of the sixteenth century Pius V. forbade all public discussions on the subject, except under certain limitations. Pius IX. now ascertained the opinion of the bishops of the whole Church on the matter. Some French and German bishops were opposed, but 576 were favourable. He then submitted it to the consideration of various "congregations," and the concurring bishops were invited to Rome to fix the terms of the definition of the new dogma, which was announced in a decree, and declared to be an article of Catholic belief on December 8th, 1854.

### 2. *The Papal Syllabus*

2. The Papal Syllabus and the purport of it.

The Pope's next big performance was the issue of his "Encyclical" of December 8th, 1864, addressed to all Catholic bishops, with the famous "Syllabus" which accompanied it, setting out in eighty-four propositions all the alleged errors of the time, asserting the right of the Roman Catholic Church to exercise complete control over education, science, and literature, condemning and denouncing as heretical modern claims to toleration, freedom of belief and worship, liberty of the press, and liberty of thought in the realms of science, the State's independence

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz.

of the Church, the equality of the laity and clergy in civil matters, all secret societies, and all Bible societies, and, in short, all the recognised principles of modern scientific, civil, social, political and religious life. Papal immobility, or in other words, a reactionary and ill-informed ultramontaniam, was declared at war with progressive human thought and modern civilisation. It was not only a reassertion of the colossal, preposterous and ludicrous claims of the mediæval Papacy to supreme authority on every subject under the sun; if possible it even went beyond them.

### 3. *The Dogma of Papal Infallibility*

Next in importance came the *Vatican Council*, which opened in December, 1869, and on July 18th, 1870, decreed the dogma of Papal infallibility—a dogma which demands somewhat fuller notice from us. In Caput IV. of the *Constitutio Dogmatica Prima* of the Council it is defined as follows: “That the Roman Pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when, executing the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by his supreme apostolic authority he defines a doctrine relating to faith or morals to be held by the whole Church, by the Divine assistance promised to him in St. Peter, he is endued with that infallibility with which the Holy Redeemer willed His Church to be supplied in defining doctrine relating to faith or morals; and that consequently such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of their own nature, and not as a consequence of the consent of the Church.” This was embodied in the Bull *Pastor Æternus*, in which Pius IX. proclaimed the absolute plenipotence, including the infallibility, of himself and all his predecessors and successors. But although it enacts Papal infallibility in defining doctrine, it will be observed that the definition is drawn with such adroitness and skill, and is so hedged with conditions, as if the very object of it was to create an ambiguity as to its applicability to almost any particular case.

Now to enable the Council to pass a straightforward dogma affirming Papal infallibility required either indomitable ignorance of the history of the Church, or unparalleled audacity, or a mixture of both. It is significant that the great Roman Catholic Church historians of the time, such as Döllinger, Hefele, Friedrich, Huber, Lord Acton, were earnestly and intensely opposed to it. How could they be otherwise? In the early Christian centuries there is not the

The meaning of it explained.

Its ambiguity such that its application to almost any particular case may be called in question.

The great Roman Church historians of the time opposed to it, and why?

slightest trace of evidence that the dogma was believed by any one; there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary. It never occurred to any one at that time that the Bishop of Rome was an infallible guide and teacher in matters of faith or morals. The Nicene Council was called together at enormous expense and trouble from the ends of the earth to determine the true doctrine with regard to Christ's relation to the Godhead. It never occurred to any one to suggest that if the Bishop of Rome would only give an *ex cathedra* deliverance on the subject, the matter would be finally, infallibly and for ever settled. When in successive centuries great controversies arose on vital doctrines in the Church—such as the Gnostic, Monarchian, Arian, Macedonian, Pelagian, Apollinarian, Nestorian, Eutychian, Monophysite, and Monothelite controversies—it is most singular that no one ever suggested that a definition by the Pope *ex cathedra* would be infallible, and would for ever put an end to disputes which agitated and shook the Church to its very foundations; but that great Councils were summoned from far and near to decide on the true doctrine.

Very few of the Bishops of Rome experts in theology, or capable of deciding in matters of doctrine.

And there was a good and sufficient reason for this remarkable circumstance. As a matter of fact very few of the Bishops of Rome were experts in theology, or capable of deciding on matters of doctrine with knowledge and intelligence. In one case, it is true—that of Leo the Great—the Roman bishop was at once an exceptionally able man and an expert theologian. Leo, therefore, rendered an important service in connection with the doctrine of the Person of Christ, and his suggestions were in substance accepted by the Council of Chalcedon; but neither he himself nor any one else claimed on his behalf that he was an infallible teacher, and that on that ground his judgment should be binding on the Church. It was not until the suggestions of Leo were endorsed by the Council that they were regarded as authoritative. But even so the case of Leo was exceptional. Many of the Bishops of Rome were not only unqualified to pronounce on doctrinal matters, not a few of them were positively heretical.

Many of the bishops of Rome positively heretical.

Pope Callistus.

Pope Liberius.

Hippolytus, a learned and able man, of high character, distinctly accuses the Roman bishop Callistus, whom he calls "an impostor and a knave," giving good reasons for so designating him, not only of being a Noetian and a Patripassian himself, identifying the Father and the Son, but of inducing Zephyrinus, the aged and "illiterate" predecessor of Callistus, to adopt the same heresy. Another

Bishop of Rome, Liberius (352—366) was driven into exile by the Emperor Constantius for refusing to concur in the condemnation of Athanasius. But, after two years' exile in Thrace, Liberius was induced to sign a creed, repudiating Athanasius and renouncing communion with him. He wrote to the Arians apologising for having defended Athanasius, adding: "So then Athanasius being removed from the communion of us all, so that I am not even to receive his letters, I say that I am quite at peace and concord with you all, and with all the Eastern bishops throughout the provinces. But that you may know better that in this letter I speak in true faith, the same as my common lord and brother, Demophilus [Demophilus was Bishop of Constantinople, and a strong Arian], who was so good as to exhibit your Catholic creed . . . this I received with willing mind, and contradicted in nothing." In his *Apology against the Arians*, 89, Athanasius says: "He [Liberius] did not endure to the end the affliction of banishment." Again, in his *History of the Arians*, he says, "Liberius . . . broke down, and, in fear of threatened death, signed, etc." Jerome emphatically affirms that Liberius did under pressure sign something "heretical,"<sup>1</sup> and that, overcome by the weariness of exile, "et in haereticam pravitatem subscribens," he had returned to Rome.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Döllinger is convinced that he signed both the long Sirmian Creed, and the "Compilation," and that his signing involved "a sacrifice of the Nicene doctrine"<sup>3</sup>; and Duchesne, the celebrated French Roman Catholic historian and Academician, affirms that the proceeding of Liberius "meant the abandonment of the position which the Pope had maintained hitherto," and justly describes it as "a weakening, a downfall."<sup>4</sup>

We have already seen how Zosimus, a third Pope, declared Pelagius and Celestius to be of "entirely sound faith," and that they "had never been separated from Catholic truth"; but that that Divinely gifted and infallible guide and teacher found it expedient afterwards, when his gross blunder had been brought home to him by the Africans, to change both his mind and his doctrine, to condemn both Pelagius and Celestius, and to explain away as best he could his previous very deliberate approval of their heretical teaching.

We come to a fourth clear case of what Jerome design-

Pope  
Zosimus.

Pope  
Vigilius.

<sup>1</sup> "De Vir. Illustr.," c. 97.

<sup>2</sup> "Chron. Ann." 352.

<sup>3</sup> "Fables Respecting Popes," p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> Duchesne's "Early History of the Church," Vol. II., p. 266, Engl. Transl.

nates "heretical depravity" in a Roman Pontiff. When the fifth Œcumenical Council, at the instance of the Emperor Justinian, and in order to conciliate the Monophysites, anathematised the doctrines of the Three Chapters, condemning at the same time certain divines, whose orthodoxy had been endorsed by Chalcedon, Pope Vigilius at first protested and was suspended, and after much vacillation, having signified his adherence to the heretical condemnation of the *Three Chapters* he was, after seven years' absence, permitted to return to Rome. By his heretical endorsement of the condemnation of the "Three Chapters," that is, by disloyalty to the orthodox faith, he purchased his escape from exile. "His fourfold change of opinion," as Dr. Salmon remarks, "does poor service to the claim of Papal infallibility."

Pope  
Honorius.

But if possible still more glaring was the fifth instance of "heretical depravity"—that of Pope Honorius (625—638), who distinctly and emphatically endorsed the Monothelite heresy. For this he was condemned by the sixth Œcumenical Council, as well as by other Councils as "an accursed heretic"; while the "infallible" Pope Leo II. expressly confirmed the reprobation of Honorius, "who did not illuminate this Apostolic See with the doctrine of apostolic tradition, but permitted her who was undefiled to be polluted by profane teaching." The profession of faith made by successive Popes at their election for some centuries contained an expression of assent to the anathema on Honorius, and his condemnation was embodied in the Roman Breviaries to the end of the sixteenth century.

Pope  
Sixtus V.

The sixth and last case we shall cite throws a light on the claim of Papal infallibility which makes it absurd and even comical. Pope Sixtus V. in 1589 issued an edition of the Vulgate in which he claimed the right of infallibly deciding on the correct readings of the text. He employed a board of revisers to do the work; but in the preface he claimed superiority over the revisers as the successor of Peter, and proved that superiority in many cases by arbitrarily and in sheer ignorance changing the readings adopted by his revisers! He affirmed also the plenary authority of the edition for all future time. "By the fulness of apostolic power," he said, "we decree and declare that this edition, approved by the authority delivered to us by the Lord, is to be received and held as true, lawful, authentic, and unquestioned in all public and private discussion, reading, preaching, and explanation"; and

the edition was forbidden to be altered in the slightest particular. It was, of course, a piece of arrogant folly, and was soon found to be full of crude and absurd errors. By the suppression of the Bull he had prepared in connection with it, and otherwise, the ridiculous *faux pas* was as far as possible concealed, but it was impossible to hide it.

Yet in the face of such gross "heretical depravity" on the part of a series of Popes, and a falsification of inspired Scripture itself on the part of one, an infallibility which is declared to be "irreformable" was claimed for all of them.

The heretical deviations of Popes like Liberius, Vigilius, and Honorius, were notorious, and along with other well-known facts in the history were sufficient to prevent the claim of infallibility being advanced during a long course of centuries. It was not indeed till after the doctrine of Papal supremacy had reached its climax that the doctrine of infallibility began to be broached. Even the great and powerful Popes under whom the Papacy rose to its greatest height, in practically asserting that supremacy, did not claim doctrinal infallibility. Even Gregory VII. (Hildebrand) does not seem to have made any such claim, although his ignorance of Church history led him to boast that no heretic had ever sat in the Roman chair, and he inferred from Christ's assurance to Peter in Luke xxii. 32, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," that none ever would. Pope Innocent III., the most powerful of the Popes after Gregory, and better educated than he, publicly acknowledged that even the Pope might err in matters of faith, and that only then was he amenable to the judgment of the Church; while Innocent IV. taught expressly that the Pope might err. The first person of note to affirm the doctrine appears to have been Thomas Aquinas, who taught that the Pope alone could decide finally on matters of faith, that the decrees of Councils became valid and authoritative only when confirmed by him. Through the influence of the great Reforming Councils of the fifteenth century the doctrine fell into disfavour. But it was zealously advocated by the Jesuits, to whose influence Pius IX. more and more surrendered himself, so that at last, as it has been put, "he saw only with their eyes, heard only with their ears, and resolved only according to their will."<sup>1</sup> It was through their influence, and that of the ultramontanes and obscurantists of the time, and in opposition to the

Even Gregory VII. (Hildebrand) did not claim for himself in express terms actual infallibility;

and Innocent III. admitted the Pope might err.

The dogma advocated by Thomas Aquinas,

but opposed by the great reforming Councils.

But through the influence of the Jesuits and the help of the ultramontanes

<sup>1</sup> Geffcken.

the dogma  
was passed.

judgment and earnest remonstrances of the great Roman Catholic historians that the dogma was carried. Archbishop Manning supported it with the zeal and ardour of a new convert.

#### 4. *Stigmatisations*

St. Francis  
of Assisi  
found  
marked  
after his  
death by  
the wound-  
prints of the  
Saviour.

Soon after the death of St. Francis of Assisi in 1226 the story got into circulation that a seraph with six shining wings, blazing with fire, and having between his wings the figure of a man crucified, had appeared to Francis a couple of years before he died, and had imprinted on his body the nail-prints and other wounds of the Saviour on the cross.

The Dominicans  
denied  
that it was  
done miraculously.

The Dominicans strongly disputed the story, but put forward a somewhat similar claim in behalf of Catharine of Sienna. It is probable that St. Francis had himself made the "stigmata" on his own body in imitation of the

One hundred  
and  
forty-five  
persons  
have  
claimed to  
have been  
marked  
similarly.

wounds of Christ. Dr. Gourbeyre in his work on the subject enumerates 145 persons, the majority prior to the seventeenth century, and nearly all women, who professed to have received the "stigmata" on their bodies. But in the time of Pius IX., under the influences already indicated, there was in some regions a remarkable recrudescence of such phenomena. It is known that at least in a considerable number of instances the alleged wound-marks were due to fraud. There was, for example, the case of Louise Lateau, daughter of a Belgian miner, who bore these marks, and professed to be able to live without food. She fell into an ecstasy from which she could be awaked only by her bishop, or some person authorised by him. Skilful physicians, after careful examination, said she was labouring under a disease which they called "stigmatic neuropathy" and chemical analysis proved the presence of food which had been regularly partaken of. At length she was deserted by the ultramontane clergy, and treated as a weak-minded invalid. She died quite neglected in 1883.

A recrudescence  
of  
such  
phenomena  
under  
Pius IX.

In many  
cases the  
wound-  
marks due  
to fraud.

Cases cited.

Another case was that of Caroline Beller in Westphalia, a girl fifteen years of age. A physician put linen cloths over the wound-prints, and the next day they were marked by bloodstains, but strips of paper which had been laid under them without her knowledge were found pricked with needles. She ultimately confessed her deceit, and said she had been tempted by reading about St. Francis, Catharine of Sienna and Emmerich.

In some  
cases pro-  
bably no

But while in many cases the wound-marks were no doubt fraudulent, there were probably others wherein there was

no intentional deceit. Men eminent in medical science <sup>intentional</sup> have concluded from all the evidence that, in some cases <sup>deceit.</sup> at all events, the so-called "stigmata" are due to a certain pathological condition, which they have designated "stigmatic neuropathy." It is a "far cry" from this to the conclusion that they are a signal and supernatural token of Divine favour.

### 5. *Amulets and Charms*

Under the same influence, there was about the same time another outbreak of superstition in the widespread recourse to amulets and charms. Reference has been made already to the seamless, holy coat of Treves, which in 1845 was exhibited in that ancient city by the Roman Catholic bishop, which drew thither, it is stated, nearly two millions of pilgrims, and cured the grand niece of the Bishop of Cologne of knee-joint disease. Carefully examined, the "holy coat" proved to be a bit of the grey woollen wrapping of a costly silk Byzantine garment. But no amulets were thought to be more effective than certain "scapulars," or <sup>The holy coat of Treves.</sup> pieces of woollen cloth worn on the shoulders underneath the clothes. Different orders adopted different colours. The Carmelites had a brown, the Trinitarians a white, the Theatines a blue, the Servites a black, and the Lazarites a red scapular. A tract published by episcopal authority at Münster in 1872 gave assurance that any one who wore the five scapulars would share in all the graces and indulgences that belonged to them severally. <sup>Scapulars.</sup> The Carmelite scapular appears to have been specially efficacious, and would have been invaluable in the present war, for it was impenetrable to bullets, impervious to daggers, stilled stormy seas, extinguished fires, made falls harmless, and healed disease. Instead of scapulars the Benedictines offered <sup>Benedict medals.</sup> Benedict-medals, which, according to a tract of 1876, cured sickness, relieved toothache, stopped bleeding at the nose, overcame the craving for strong drink, warded off evil spirits, tamed skittish horses, cured sick cattle, and killed the blight on vines. Great miracles of healing and protection were attributed by the Jesuits to "the holy water of St. Ignatius and St. Xavier," the sale of which was most lucrative. <sup>"The holy water of St. Ignatius and St. Xavier."</sup> The blood of St. Januarius, a martyr of the time of Diocletian, liquefies three times a year at Naples, and is found a great <sup>The blood of St. Januarius.</sup> specific and effective antidote against earthquakes. It is an inestimable boon to the clergy.



6. *Visions of the Virgin.*

The most famous  
those seen  
at Lourdes  
in France  
in 1858.

Others at  
La Salette.

But they  
came to a  
height in  
Alsace-  
Lorraine in  
1872.

But Ireland  
not behind.  
Appear-  
ances of the  
Virgin on  
chapel wall  
at Knock,  
co. Mayo.

Visions at  
Treves in  
Germany.

The most famous of these were those which appeared in a grotto at Lourdes in France in 1858 to a peasant girl of fourteen years, said to be almost imbecile. A well, whose waters were supposed to possess miracle-working virtue, sprang up at the place. Since 1872 the pilgrimages thither have been on an immense scale, and both in character and in number the cures have been extraordinary. Again, in the village of La Salette in the department of Isère a boy and girl saw a lady dressed in white sitting on a stone and shedding tears, and where her foot rested a well sprang up, at which cures without number have been wrought. But the epidemic of such visions reached its height in Alsace-Lorraine in 1872, when crowds of women and children professed to see visions of the mother of God.

In such matters Ireland can compete with most countries. In the county of Mayo there is a village called Knock, where what was taken for a luminous appearance of the Virgin was seen on the chapel wall in 1880. For a long time afterwards crowds of pilgrims flocked to the place to behold the visions, and many miraculous cures were reported to have been made.

In the summer of 1876 three girls of eight years of age, in the department of Treves in Germany, saw a white-robed lady by a well, with a halo over her head, and a child in her arms. Multitudes came from far and near, and miraculous cures were wrought by the water of the well. The clergy of the locality found a means of extending the healing virtue of the water beyond their own neighbourhood, and at the same time the opportunity of making a little money, by sending some of the water to America, while a newspaper in Berlin advertised and lauded it. The children before a court of justice confessed the whole thing to be a fraud on their part, and the Supreme Court of Appeal in 1879 pronounced the whole affair to be "a scandalous and disgraceful swindle."

7. *Devotion of the Sacred Heart*

Pope  
Pius IX. in  
1875 re-  
solved that  
the whole  
world should  
adore the  
Sacred  
Heart.

A great impetus was given to this cult in the year 1875, for Pope Pius IX. resolved that on July 16th of that year, the two hundredth anniversary of the singular occurrences at Paray-le-Monial in France, when Margaret Alacoque professed to have visions of the physical heart of Jesus, the whole world should give adoration to the Sacred Heart.

Accordingly, that day was fixed for the laying of the foundation stone of a great church at Montmartre—the highest point in Paris—to be known as “the Church of the Sacred Heart.” The splendid memorial church erected on that site cost nearly a million pounds sterling. Since then the cult of the Sacred Heart has extended, and grown more and more popular, until it has become probably the chief cult next to Mary worship in modern Roman Catholicism. It is very much to the front in Ireland, where even the National Schools under Roman Catholic management are everywhere adorned with representations of the Sacred Heart.

Since then the cult has grown more and more popular—the most popular after that of Mary.

A brief account of the incidents out of which this comparatively new cult has grown under Jesuit influence must here be given, for they are deeply significant of the sensuous forms which Latin Christianity has evolved and has been assuming even in modern times.

A brief account of its origin.

The originator of the cult of the Sacred Heart was Margaret Alacoque, who was born in Burgundy in 1647. Recovering from a severe illness when only three years old, she made a vow of perpetual chastity to Mary the Virgin-Mother (who, it is said, often appeared to her), and entered the convent of Paray-le-Monial in Burgundy. As she advanced in years, we are informed that, to enable her to resist certain strong temptations to which she was subject, she inflicted on herself severe self-chastenings such as long fasts, lying upon thorns, painful self-flagellations, and the like. It is no wonder that her health was affected, and it was inevitable that a peculiar pathological condition of constitution and temperament should be created by such treatment. We are not surprised, therefore, to hear of a series of visions or hallucinations of a very materialistic and sensuous kind which she now had, and which an unhealthy, neurotic, morbid person, worn down by fasting and self-mortification, would be almost certain to have. In the first vision she thought she saw the side of her Beloved opened, and that His heart, which she saw within, seemed to be glowing like a sun, into which her own heart was absorbed. She seems also to have begun to lavish on Him expressions of endearment of the most rapturous, passionate, and amatory kind. The present writer personally witnessed many cases of a somewhat similar sort in connection with a remarkable religious movement in Ulster in 1859, in which women were literally stricken down, thrown into a peculiar neurotic state, fell often into a sort of trance, in which, no

It began with Margaret Alacoque, born in 1647. Her story.

Her long fasts and self-flagellations produced a peculiar pathological condition.

This resulted in visions of a very sensuous kind.

Character of the visions—she saw disclosed the physical heart of Jesus.

doubt under some sort of religious hysteria, they had extraordinary hallucinations, and believed that they had the most enrapturing visions of the Saviour, and gave minute details of His appearance.

A second vision.

In a second vision or hallucination the nun at Paray-le-Monial professed to have seen her Beloved's heart burning like a furnace, into which again her own heart was taken, and that of her spiritual adviser; for she had already chosen as her religious guide a Jesuit called La Colombière, who, as it happened, acted as chaplain at the Court of James II. She stated that down to the time of her death she continued to have violent pains in her side.

Noteworthy things:  
1. It was the physical fleshly heart she saw.

Several noteworthy things, distinctly implied in her statements, are here worthy of remark as we pass. One is that the heart which she thought she saw, the adoration of which she set on foot, was the fleshly, physical heart of Jesus. This is freely admitted—that it was the bodily organ of the heart of Jesus which she imagined that she beheld in vision. And a second notable thing is that she always pictures Christ as still suffering and as having to endure a heart burning with pain in heaven. It was, therefore, not without reason that the Jansenists attacked the "Devotion of the Sacred Heart" as at variance with Catholic doctrine, and called its promoters "Nestorians," "Cardiolatræ," and "Cardicolæ."

2. She pictured Christ as still suffering.

A third vision in which the Beloved enjoined the worship of the Sacred Heart.

Her Jesuit adviser did his utmost to have this carried out.

But opposed by the Dominicans.

I have spoken of two visions. In a third vision which the nun professed to have she said that the Beloved enjoined the observance of a special "Devotion of the Sacred Heart" by all Christendom on the Friday after the octave of the *Corpus Christi* festival, and on the first Friday every month. Her Jesuit adviser, La Colombière, put forth every effort to have this done throughout the whole Church, and the whole Jesuit order seconded and supported the proposal. The movement, however, was bitterly opposed by the Dominicans, and the utmost efforts of the Jesuits at that time were not successful in securing Papal sanction for the new cult. Both in 1697 and later, in 1729, the Congregation of Sacred Rites emphatically refused to give its sanction to the festival of the Sacred Heart; although at the opening of the eighteenth century there were already many societies engaged in the devotion. In 1765 Clement XIII., the special friend of the Jesuits, gave his formal sanction to it; and on the restoration of the Jesuit order many brotherhoods and sisterhoods devoted themselves to the furtherance of this

Clement XIII. gave his sanction in 1765.

cult, promoting it by the use of images and pictures ; while many pilgrims flocked to Paray-le-Monial to pray to the Sacred Heart. In 1856, under the Pontificate of Pius IX. it was extended to the whole Church, and in 1864 the nun who originated it, Margaret Marie Alacoque, was beatified.

In 1856 through Pius IX. extended to the whole Church, and Margaret Alacoque beatified later.

In the Bull, *Auctorem Fidei*, which authoritatively explains the nature and character of the worship, we are expressly informed that the faithful worship with supreme adoration the physical heart of Jesus as united with Divinity. The reference to and inclusion of "Divinity" looks very like an afterthought introduced to palliate and excuse the supreme adoration of a physical organ. In any case, to make a physical organ, a part of the human body or flesh of Christ, the basis, centre, and medium of "supreme adoration," is very extraordinary, but is of a piece with what we have witnessed all along in our study of the evolution of Latin Christianity. It is, in fact, a very bold and audacious experiment to push the sensuous, materialising, paganising drift and tendency in Roman Catholicism farther than ever before, as if designed to test its devotees and adherents in order to ascertain how much they can stand of this kind of thing. The result seems to prove that their early matriculation and long and gradual education in the religious use of the sensuous and material enables them to stand a great deal of this sort of thing. The attempts to explain away the sensuous character of the cult have only made it more manifest.

A Bull declared that the faithful give supreme adoration to the physical heart united with Divinity.

The latest effort we have seen with this object is the article on this subject in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* by Jean Bainvel, Professor of Theology in the Catholic Institute, Paris. It is a plausible attempt to justify the crudely sensuous basis and medium of the cult, but seems to us a very decided failure. Professor Bainvel says : "*Worship is rightly paid to the heart of flesh* inasmuch as the latter symbolises and recalls the love of Jesus, and His emotional and moral life." "Although directed to the material heart," he affirms, "it does not stop there ; it also includes love." "In the devotion," he adds, "there are two elements : a sensible element, the heart of flesh, and a spiritual element, that which the heart of flesh recalls and represents."

Professor Bainvel's attempt to justify it.

Now observe (1) Professor Bainvel not only admits, but positively affirms, that "*worship is rightly paid to the heart of flesh.*" Let this be carefully noted. (2) It is claimed, however, that the worship is paid to "the heart of flesh "

Reply to Professor Bainvel.

as a *symbol* of the emotional and moral life. To which we reply that to a plain, unsophisticated person it seems odd to offer "supreme adoration" even to a *symbol*, a physical symbol, no matter what it may symbolise. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God [not a physical symbol], and Him only shalt thou serve."<sup>1</sup> It was evidently to the heart of flesh that the devotion of Margaret Marie Alacoque herself was primarily directed. The reference to "Divinity" and to "the emotional and moral life" is too obviously a later effort—and a somewhat lame one—to justify from a theoretical and theological point of view the worship of a physical organ. The children in the schools, and the common people who are urged and incited to "the devotion of the Sacred Heart" to-day, the vast bulk of whom are quite uneducated, and illiterate, in offering their adoration to "the heart of flesh" are little troubled with philosophical or theological subtleties. They have visible representations of "the heart of flesh" put before them in pictures and images, and, quite undisturbed by Professor Bainvel's metaphysical distinctions, they offer to it "supreme adoration." Dr. Bainvel himself says: "Since in images of the Sacred Heart the symbolic expression must dominate all else, anatomical accuracy is not looked for." "A visible heart is necessary for an image of the Sacred Heart." "Similar observations," he adds, "are in order for physiology, in which devotion cannot be totally disinterested, because the heart of flesh towards which the worship is directed . . . is the Heart of Jesus, the real, living heart that in all truth may be said to have loved and suffered."

Pictures of  
the Sacred  
Heart.

Offices of  
the Sacred  
Heart.

In a picture of the Sacred Heart which lies before me as I write, a picture in wide use both in schools and elsewhere, we have a conventional and rather gaudy representation of our Lord, with the nail-wounds in His hands, and in the centre of the breast a representation of the organ of the heart, having the appearance of being lacerated, with flames ascending from it, and drops of blood falling from it. In *The Nine Offices of the Sacred Heart*, by the Rev. Joseph McDonnell, S.J., under the head of "The First Office—the Adorer," we have a prayer beginning: "O adorable Heart of Jesus, Heart of the King of Glory, I prostrate myself before Thee. I adore Thee," etc. Under the head of "The Second Office—the Victim," we are told: "Jesus here invites us to share with Him in

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iv. 10.

His office of Victim, by making, in union with His marvellous immolation, the generous sacrifice of ourselves, and of all we have and are, *to atone for the offences offered by ourselves and others to the outraged Majesty of the Eternal Father.*"

Farther on in his article in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, Professor Bainvel affords us a little suggestive insight into the sort of revelations on which the "Devotion of the Sacred Heart" is based. "What deserves special mention," he says, "is the vision of St. Gertrude on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, as it forms an epoch in the history of the devotion. Allowed to rest her head near the wound in the Saviour's side, she heard the beating of the Divine heart, and asked John if, on the night of the Last Supper, he too had felt these delightful pulsations, why he had never spoken of the fact. John replied that this revelation had been reserved for subsequent ages when the world, having grown cold, would have need of it to rekindle its love."

Revelations and representations on which the devotion of the Sacred Heart is based.

But absorbing and popular as was the "Devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus," the worship of Mary, the fourth person in the Quaternity (for the Trinity has been displaced by a Quaternity), could not be allowed to be outstripped or overshadowed by the worship of the Heart of her Son. Accordingly, a priest called Eudes set on foot the new cult of the "Worship of the Immaculate Heart of Mary," which was approved by Pius VI. in 1799, had a proper mass and offices assigned to it by Pius IX. in 1855, and is now running parallel with the cult of the Heart of Jesus in Latin Christianity.

But Mary could not be outshone by her Son, and so to-day the adoration of the immaculate heart of Mary is running parallel with the cult of the heart of Jesus.

We have thus concluded our rapid survey of the evolutionary processes which Latin Christianity has undergone, and of the extraordinary effects produced by them. Let the reader now briefly recall them, pass his eye quickly over them and the changes which they effected, and say what he thinks of them. He has seen the ministry of the New Testament, absolutely free from the taint of sacerdotalism, changed into a priesthood, with all the pagan characteristics of priesthood, through the agency of men, like Tertullian and Cyprian, bred and brought up in a heathen environment. Under the influence of the dualistic principle of pagan philosophy that evil is inseparable from matter, and can be escaped only by ascetic mortification of the flesh, he has seen the rise and spread of monasticism in

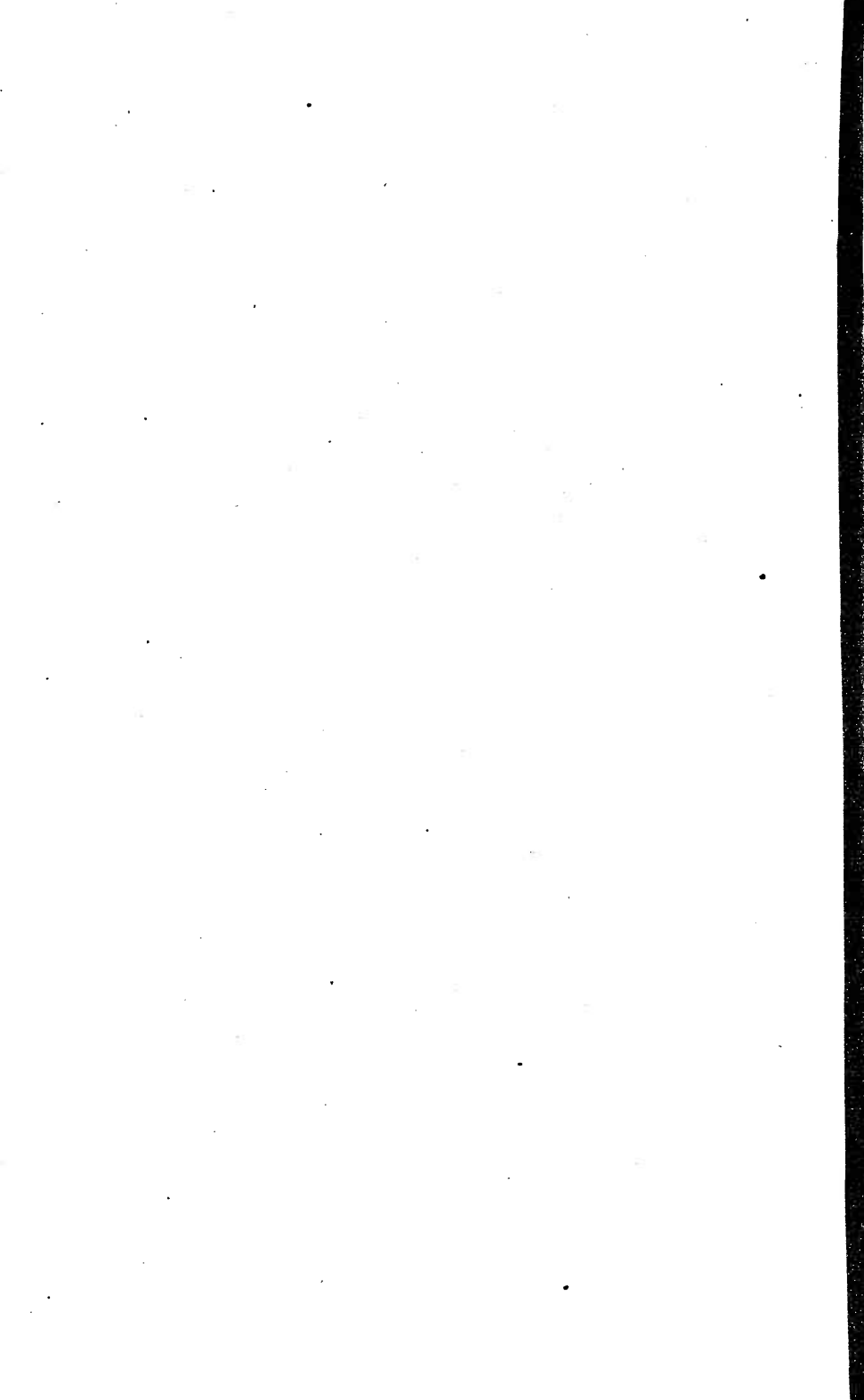
Conclusion.

the Church. By the suggestion of an apocryphal, Ebionitic romance he has seen started the unhistorical fiction that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, and Primate of the Church Universal, and has transmitted his authority to all his successors, who moreover claimed supremacy both in Church and State, and, in spite of the notorious fact that many of the occupants of the Papal chair were grossly heretical, construed the promise, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," into a pledge of Papal infallibility. He has seen the New Testament call to "repentance" transmuted into the stupendous sacrament of "Penance," which admits the priest into the most secret and sacred privacies of personal and family life, which, instead of "contrition" or godly sorrow for sin, accepts of "attrition" or an inferior sorrow arising from fear of hell and the like; and, such confession being made, the priest, assuming the prerogative of the Almighty, Omniscient, and Divine Judge of all, absolves the sinner from the guilt of sin and its eternal punishment. The reader has seen all this, and seen emerging the evil practice of commuting penances for money payments, and the deplorable system of indulgences, based on an imaginary treasury of surplus merit in charge of the Pope, from which he can dispense pardons at pleasure. He has seen the simple but sublime service of the Lord's Supper, designed to commemorate the death of the Redeemer, converted into a repetition of the great sacrifice of Calvary, which sacred writ expressly affirms was made "once for all." He has seen the arrogant claim of the priest that he literally "transubstantiates" the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, that he (the priest) by the consecration of the wafer *makes* the body and blood, *creates* in short the Lord of heaven and earth, body, soul, and Divinity; while he dares at the same time to curtail and mutilate our Lord's own institution, and to withhold the cup from the laity altogether. He has seen the simple, spiritual worship of the apostolic Church debased and materialised by the addition and admixture of saint worship, image worship, worship of relics, Mariolatry, Devotion of the Sacred Heart (Christ's heart of flesh), and the like. In noting all this, and much more of the same character, how can he resist the conclusion that such developments are not legitimate growths, but excrescences which contradict and violate the fundamental principles taught by our Lord and His apostles, and degrade the pure, spiritual religion which they

inculcated to the level of pagan cults? How can he do other than endorse the verdict of that most impartial and judicially-minded historian, the late Professor Gwatkin, that "the assimilation of Christianity to heathenism from the third century is matter of history," and that "the one thing certain is that it was in most respects rather a reversal of Christ's plain teaching than a development of principles laid down by Him" <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin's "Early Church History," Vol. I., p. 269.





## APPENDIX

*Appreciations received by the Author from the Rev. President M. Leitch, M.A., D.Lit., D.D., and the Rev. Professor T. M. Hamill, M.A., D.D.*

President Leitch wrote :—

I have read the greater part of this book as lectures on Church History to the students of Dr. Heron's Class during his illness, and after each chapter was read I examined them on its contents. I have been greatly struck by the intelligent interest which they have taken in the subject, and the facility and clearness with which they have apprehended the leading facts and arguments. This result is no doubt due to the lucidity and vigour of the thought and style of the author. Dr. Heron's method throughout the book is simplicity itself. It is the method of the modern exponent of science when he is exhibiting the biological development of an organism. - The geologist shows the evolution of a plant or animal by exhibiting it *in situ* as it is found in the strata of the crust of the earth in successive geological ages. So the author exhibits each characteristic feature of Latin Christianity as it presents itself in the successive periods of the history of the Christian Church. He usually begins with the New Testament, and shows how it is presented there; then he examines the sub-apostolic period for any traces of it that may be found there, and goes on to show the successive stages of its evolution wherever it presents itself in the history of the Church or in pagan religions. His treatment of Mariolatry affords a good example of his method. He shows how in the Gospels Mary is honoured as the mother of Jesus, and how our Lord treats her with the respect and affection which is due to her; but at the same time he shows that He does not suffer her to interfere with the work which the Father has given Him to do; nay, He explicitly states that the natural relationships of motherhood and brotherhood are subordinate to the spiritual relation of discipleship. The various stages of the beginnings of her worship are pointed out and the impetus which it received from the worship of pagan goddesses; till at length the worship of Mary as the Mother of God and the Queen of Heaven, the fourth person in a Divine Quaternity, has become the chief cult of modern Roman Catholicism.

Dr. Heron is not blinded by biological analogy in the term 'evolution' to the fact that, in the successive changes which led to the chief rites and dogmas and institutions characteristic of Latin Christianity, the movement is not upwards,

but downwards; not a development, but a degeneration. He clearly shows that the change from the teaching of our Lord and His apostles to that of the Latin Church is always for the worse. Repentance becomes penance, faith becomes belief, worship becomes ritual, the spiritual is ever becoming the material and the sacramental the magical, till Latin Christianity exhibits more of the features of paganism than of the original Christian faith. Dr. Heron gives abundant references by which the facts which he presents can be verified, so that it is not easy to deny them; and the deductions which he makes from the facts appear inevitable and irresistible.

MATTHEW LEITCH.

Dr. Hamill's estimate<sup>1</sup> follows:—

During the College Session now closing it has been my privilege to read with some care parts of the Lectures my colleague, Professor Heron, is publishing in his volume on "The Evolution of Latin Christianity." It is little to say that I have found them both interesting and illuminating, and in their method of treatment fresh, forceful and thorough. That dogma can be understood and appraised only in the light of its historical evolution is generally recognised. It is, therefore, a distinct service to the cause of evangelical truth to take up the constitutive factors of modern Romanism *seriatim*, fix the period of their emergence in history, trace their course, determine the influences shaping their growth, and show that, so far from being legitimate developments from primitive Christianity, they are for the most part irreconcilable with its fundamental principles. For it is of vital importance in these days of arrogant and aggressive sacerdotalism to make manifest the true causes at work in transforming a religion such as was original Christianity, with no priesthood or provision for priestly functions, into a system which makes priestly mediation and ritual essential to the realisation of communion with God. Nor is it of less moment to bring out the process by which the dogma of Papal infallibility was evolved from a purely fictitious basis. There should, therefore, be a ready welcome for a book presenting systematically and convincingly the extraneous and inimical influences by which the Church of the Apostles was step by step changed into one of alien spirit and constitution. In providing this Dr. Heron makes a valuable contribution to Historical Theology.

THOMAS M. HAMILL.

<sup>1</sup> Since the above appreciation reached the printer's hands, Dr. Hamill has himself passed away.

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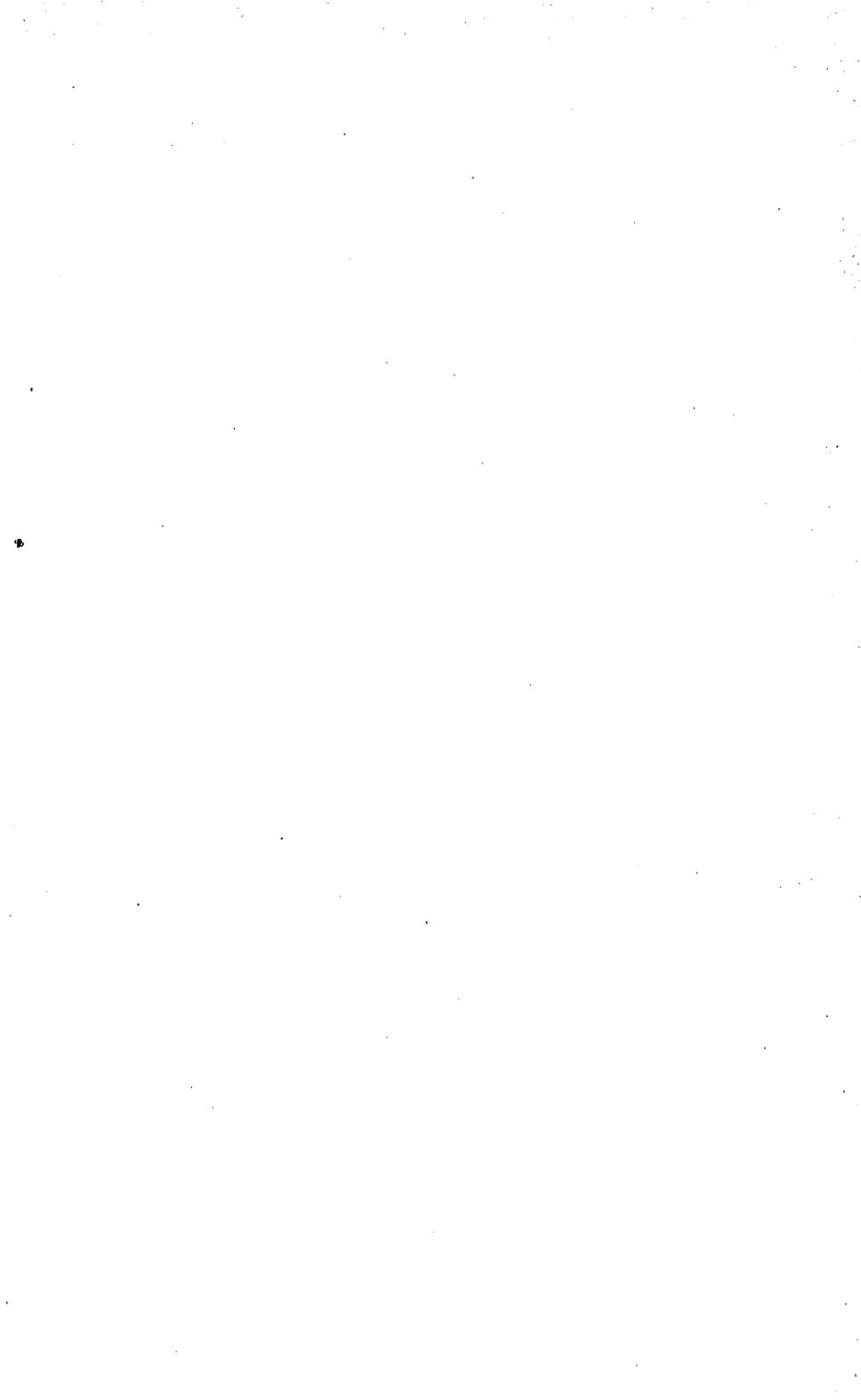
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